

# SONGS OF THE SEA

(SAGAR-SANGIT)

C. R. DAS  
AND  
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GANESHI & CO. MADRAS

THE POETRY OF MATTHEW ARNOLD

*A Commentary*



*The Poetry of*  
MATTHEW ARNOLD

A COMMENTARY

BY

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TO  
KARL YOUNG



## PREFACE

THIS is the companion volume to a new edition of the complete Poetical Works of Matthew Arnold, to be published, it is hoped, in 1941. The book requires the use of an edition (such, for example, as the 'Globe'), in which the poems are arranged in the order in which Arnold left them. The reader will find many passages—and even single lines—here discussed in some detail, though space could not be spared to print the text of the poem of which they are a part; moreover the notes provided by the poet himself (who was fond of annotating his work) are not here reprinted, since they will be included in the forthcoming volumes, together with his prefaces and appendices.

In discussing the various poems no attempt has been made to achieve uniformity of treatment, save for a certain general procedure which will be obvious to the reader. The commentaries naturally vary in length, as well as in interest and importance. Disappointingly little has been discovered as to the exact date of composition of many of Arnold's poems; what might be learned, therefore, from an exact chronology of the poems, we are unable to provide. Nor have we attempted to produce a 'handbook' with full annotation of matters which may be settled by easy recourse to books of reference.

The plan of the present treatise came into being when the discovery of what is here called the Yale Manuscript disclosed a large amount of new information regarding Arnold's development as a poet. We have been privileged to use, as well, a considerable store of other unpublished papers, and of books left in Arnold's library. These materials

have often afforded the key, not merely to the origin of a poem, but also to its meaning and significance.

We have prefixed no introductory essay dealing with the development and cessation of Arnold as a poet because that is, in effect, the unifying subject of the book, however fragmentary and disunited it may at first appear. A reading of our remarks on 'Resignation,' 'Rugby Chapel,' and 'Ob-  
ermann Once More,' for example, will give a person who has not time or inclination for the perusal of the entire volume an adequate notion of what we conceive to be the relation between Arnold's poetry and his philosophy of life, as well as of his inevitable transition from poetry to prose.

The collaboration of the editors has been complete from the first investigation to the final draft. The actual writing of the commentary has been a joint labour, and the first draft of each editor has been reworked by the other. We hope that a collaboration so entirely shared at every stage, with its opportunity for frequent reconsideration of the subject, has resulted in a sane and tempered estimate. At any rate, both of us are responsible for the view of Arnold's life and poetical work here expressed.

If in thus telling the story of a poet's creative activity we seem at times to question his inspiration or to lay bare too closely the arts and means of his enchantment, it gives us no satisfaction, since that aim is entirely minor to our governing purpose. We have of course tried, at every point and at whatever cost to prevalent views, to construct a true history and to slight no essential part of the narrative; nevertheless our study of Arnold's poetic life has unmistakably heightened our admiration for his remarkable attainment in the face of many difficulties, for the bright powers of his

mind, and for the deep wisdom of his heart and imagination. We should hardly have been willing to follow the many trails of his widely-roving fancy and his far-collected lore had we not been persuaded that such discoveries might lead others, as they have led us, to a new enjoyment and understanding of the poems. It is, first of all, our hope that this book may direct many to a re-reading of the corpus of Arnold's verse, for, as Carleton Stanley says, 'The best commentary on any poem of Arnold is the rest of Arnold's poetry.' Only such a reconsideration will enable one to understand afresh what Swinburne asserted long ago, that 'the most memorable quality about him was his quality as a poet.' Even his prose may live chiefly because it was the prose of a poet—and thereby something more than prose.

Many specific acknowledgments of our indebtedness are made throughout the text, but at best we can indicate only partially the many courtesies shown to us over several years by many persons and in particular by the various members of the poet's family—the late Mrs. Florence Vere O'Brien, Mrs. Norman Thwaites, Miss Dorothy Ward, Miss Flora Vere O'Brien, the Reverend Roger Wodehouse, and Professor Arnold Whitridge. It is our abiding regret that the poet's daughters, Viscountess Sandhurst and Mrs. Frederick Whitridge, may not now be told, at the conclusion of our labour, how much we owe to their kindness. Professor H.W. Garrod, Professor Ernest de Selincourt, and Mr. A.P. Norrington have gone to considerable trouble in our behalf; and Mr. Frederick Page, whose criticisms have put many an author and editor in his debt, has given us invaluable aid. His detailed comment on an early draft of our manuscript was in itself an essay in criticism; if there re-

main in our book views not always harmonious with his own, he may well recall how often he has prevailed.

Both of us have appealed to our friends, colleagues, and assistants for all manner of help, demanded in season and out of season, and if we do not here attempt an enumeration of so large a company, it is because such mention would be at once an unworthy expression of our thanks and an inadequate acknowledgment of our indebtedness. We accept with silent gratitude help freely given by such as had no other wish than to help us in our need. We acknowledge the favour of grants extended to one of us by the John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation, and by the American Council of Learned Societies.

The index is the work of Miss Jean Lichty.

C. B. T.

H. F. L.

*February 1, 1940.*

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## INTRODUCTION



## THE PUBLICATION OF THE VARIOUS EDITIONS

ARNOLD's treatment of the successive editions of his poetry is confusing to his readers. He was incessantly classifying and re-arranging his verses, cancelling and restoring poems, excerpting passages that might stand alone, revising the diction, and altering the punctuation. The waning of his poetic powers after 1855 sometimes led him to the publication of early material which might have been spared or to the revival of pieces which he had once rejected. These changes are recorded in our notes to the respective poems, but the make-up of the various volumes helps to reveal the poet's characteristic intentions, and, up to 1885, the editions have curious interrelations which it is well to understand.

All this is set forth by Thomas Burnett Smart in *The Bibliography of Matthew Arnold*, London, 1892. Here the poems in each volume are listed, and the successive exclusions and republications noted. A 'synoptical index' (pp.81-90) lists all the poems in chronological order as published, so that the reader may see at a glance in which edition a given poem first appeared and may read in tabulated form its later history. The following notes summarize the history of Arnold's poetic publications, but are not intended to serve the purpose of a bibliography.

(1) *The Strayed Reveller, and Other Poems*. 1849. Apart from his prize-poems, 'Alaric at Rome' and 'Cromwell,' this is Arnold's first volume of verse. It consists of a selection of the poems which he had been accumulating for at



least five years. It was a slender octavo of 128 pages, containing twenty-seven poems, and published anonymously as by 'A.' It was never reprinted; but all the poems, save 'The Hayswater Boat,' were used in later editions. The common assertion that the book was suppressed is erroneous, for it was advertised, at the end of the volume of 1852, as still for sale.

(2) *Empedocles on Etna, and Other Poems*. 1852. This, also published as the work of 'A,' was a stouter volume of 236 pages, contained thirty-five poems, and bore at the end an advertisement of the earlier book. Beside the titular poem, it included 'Tristram and Iseult,' so that it was somewhat more ambitious in make-up than its predecessor. Arnold later asserted <sup>1</sup> that less than fifty copies were sold, but a partial explanation of this fact, if fact it be, is that the volume of 1853 appeared within the next twelvemonth, and this one was then withdrawn.<sup>2</sup> But Arnold had taken a natural pride in seeing a volume exposed for sale in a book-stall at the railway station in Derby.<sup>3</sup>

(3) *Poems*. By Matthew Arnold, 1853. This is in many ways the most important volume of Arnold's poetry. It was described on the title-page as 'A New Edition,' because in it were reprinted a number of pieces from the two preceding volumes—notably, 'Mycecinus,' 'The Strayed Reveller,' 'The Forsaken Merman,' several of the 'Swit-

<sup>1</sup> In the notes to *New Poems*, 1867, p.243.

<sup>2</sup> In September, 1855, Messrs. Longmans' *Alphabetical Catalogue* bore the following account of *Poems*, Second Series, 1855: 'About one-third new; the rest finally selected from the volumes of 1849 and 1852, now withdrawn.'

<sup>3</sup> *Letters* I.32. November 26, 1853

zerland' lyrics, and a number of the sonnets. But the fact that it began with 'Sohrab and Rustum,' Arnold's longest poem, still tends to obscure its relation to the two preceding volumes, which were presently to be 'withdrawn' from Messrs. Longmans' lists. The poet's intention was, obviously, to include in this volume all that he cared to acknowledge as his own. A preface, setting forth his theory of poetry,<sup>4</sup> was added, perhaps in emulation of Wordsworth's practice. The book contained 248 pages, with thirty-six of preliminary matter and thirty-five poems. It was twice re-issued with the same title, as follows:

*Poems.* 1854. In this so-called 'second edition' five poems were cancelled, and 'A Farewell' introduced.<sup>5</sup>

*Poems.* 1857. This was announced on the title-page as the 'third edition.' Owing to the publication of the 'Second Series' of *Poems*, 1855, copies of this edition are often found with the words 'First Series' at the foot of the spine. It contained one new poem, 'To Marguerite.'

(4) *Poems.* Second Series. 1855. This was a volume of 210 pages, containing twenty-eight poems, the first of which was 'Balder Dead.' Arnold's rigour in excluding what he considered to be below his standard had relaxed in the interval since the publication of the volume of 1853, and he now salvaged all that he could from the first two volumes. He reprinted 'The Sick King,' 'Obermann,' and five extracts from the discarded 'Empedocles.' Except for 'Balder Dead,' the reader found in this volume almost nothing new. Of this edition, on which he looked 'with

<sup>4</sup> For this preface, see our forthcoming text of the poems.

<sup>5</sup> For the brief preface to this edition see new text of poems.

less interest' than he 'should have thought possible,' Arnold wrote to his mother, on December 9, 1854, 'I think this book will hold me in public repute pretty much at the point where the last left me, not advance me and not pull me down from it.'<sup>6</sup>

The first American edition was:

(A) *Poems*. A New and Complete Edition. Boston, Ticknor and Fields, 1856. This volume, of 336 pages, including the preface of 1853, combined the First and Second Series in one. It contained more material than had hitherto been found in one book.

(5) *Merope*. 1858. With a Preface.<sup>7</sup>

(6) *New Poems*. 1867. The first of these 'new' poems was, paradoxically, 'Empedocles on Etna,' reprinted, as Arnold proudly announced, at the request of Browning. Without this piece, which filled seventy-two pages, and 'Thyrsis,' reprinted from *Macmillan's Magazine* for April, 1866, this volume would have made a rather slender showing. It was prefaced by a cynical quatrain which seems to indicate the poet's growing realization of an unpoetic era. A second edition of the volume was, however, called for:

*New Poems*. 1868. A rather long note on Senancour was added to this edition; otherwise it contained nothing new.

The first collected edition was:

(7) *Poems*. 1869. The First Volume, Narrative and Elegiac Poems. The Second Volume, Dramatic and Lyric

<sup>6</sup> *Letters* I.41.

<sup>7</sup> See forthcoming text of poems.

Poems. Of this edition the poet wrote to his mother, on June 5:

This new edition is really a very pretty book, but you had better not buy it, because I am going to give it Fan, and shall bring it with me to Fox How, and the order of arrangement in this edition is not quite the final one I shall adopt. On this final order I could not decide till I saw this collected edition. The next edition will have the final order, and then the book will be stereotyped.<sup>8</sup>

But the next edition was not called for till 1877:

(8) *Poems* by Matthew Arnold. New and Complete Edition. 1877. The First Volume, Early Poems, Narrative Poems, and Sonnets. The Second Volume, Lyric, Dramatic, and Elegiac Poems. This, the rarest edition of Arnold's poems, contained 'Haworth Churchyard,' which had been printed in *Fraser's Magazine*, May, 1855, and its 'Epilogue,' which was new.

In 1878 Messrs. Macmillan issued a selection of Arnold's poems, uniform with the volume which he was presently to edit for them as an anthology of Wordsworth's best poems:

*Selected Poems of Matthew Arnold*. 1878. This pretty little volume of 228 pages, containing fifty-three poems, was re-issued in 1879 (with one alteration; see pp.6-8),<sup>9</sup> and at frequent intervals thereafter. It did much to spread the reputation of the poet.

The next edition of the complete poetical works was hardly more than a re-issue of 1877:

<sup>8</sup> *Letters* II.8-9.

<sup>9</sup> In later editions the sonnet to Cruikshank was dropped, and 'A Question' introduced.

*Poems*. 1881. The chief alteration in this edition was that 'The Church of Brou' was received back into the 'canon,' and classified as an early poem.

(9) *Poems*. 1885. This was in three (unnumbered) volumes, as follows: Early Poems, Narrative Poems, and Sonnets; Lyric and Elegiac Poems; Dramatic and Later Poems. The 'later poems' were 'Westminster Abbey,' 'Geist's Grave,' and 'Poor Matthias.' This was re-issued without change in 1888.

(10) *Poetical Works of Matthew Arnold*. 1890. One volume. Published in September, two-and-a-half years after the poet's death. To this collection were added two poems, 'Kaiser Dead,' published in the *Fortnightly Review*, July, 1887; and 'Horatian Echo,' from the *Century Guild Hobby Horse*, July, 1887. This has remained the standard edition of Arnold's poetical works.

### THE YALE MANUSCRIPT

THE document which we have called the Yale Manuscript is a volume of some seventy pages of notes of the roughest and most casual sort, some written in ink, some with lead pencil, several on folded sheets of ordinary letter-paper. All the sheets have been mounted on leaves of quarto size and bound in dark blue crushed levant morocco by Riviere & Son. The title-page, specially made for this volume (and therefore much later than the material contained in the book), reads

Unpublished poems / notes on lectures / and other matter / in the handwriting / of / Matthew Arnold / contained in a note book / used by the poet at / Balliol College Oxford / 1843 /

The volume was in this form when it was purchased from Dr. Gabriel Wells of New York, and made part of the Yale Collection. Its earlier history is unknown. The title, whether assigned to it by some earlier owner or by the binder or booksellers, is misleading, for the volume contains no notes on lectures attended at Oxford. It is rather a collection of first drafts of poems and of brief reflections or meditations which might possibly prove of use to the poet in his future work of composition. References to his use of materials in this volume are scattered through this commentary.

The title is also misleading in describing the material as *unpublished*, for many of the verses appear in revised form among Arnold's poetical works. There are, however, a few unfinished lyrics—some of them no more than first jottings—which the poet never brought to a satisfactory form. For a further discussion of such fragments, see p.335.

Although the first page of the volume bears the signature (in ink)

M. Arnold  
Ball: Coll:  
1843.

it must be remembered that the signature may have been affixed at a later date. The rest of the matter on the page was written with a lead pencil. Moreover one of the later sheets of the volume furnishes clear evidence of having been written after Arnold had become private secretary

to Lord Lansdowne (1847), for it is a discarded communication (in his lordship's name), the blank side of which was used by the young poet for setting down his own thoughts. Furthermore, the volume must certainly have been used in preparing the editions of 1849 and 1852, since first drafts are usually found in cancelled state, indicating that they have been revised and copied. Indeed, it seems to us reasonable to suppose that the date 1843 refers only to the origin of the particular lyric found on that page, the one to which we have given the title, 'Rude Orator,' (p.337).

Lastly, it is erroneous to refer to this group of notes, written on sheets of various size, as a *note-book* or even a *manuscript* if the term conveys the impression that it has any real continuity or unity. It is, in truth, made up of bits of paper covered, from time to time, with writing, and laid aside together as material all of which related to the author's creative interest in poetry.

Two other terms which we have used demand a word of explanation. The term 'Yale Papers' is used for a collection which includes not only the volume described above, but other poetic manuscripts and autograph letters. What we have sometimes referred to, in even more general terms, as the 'Yale Collection' is meant to include not only these 'Papers,' but also the series of volumes, in verse and prose, printed by Arnold.

### ARNOLD'S LISTS OF POEMS TO COMPOSE

PERHAPS the most important page in the Yale MS. is that containing a list of notes headed, 'Comp.1849.' Except for

the first entry in it (mentioned below) this constitutes a sort of table of contents for a volume of poems not yet written. As Arnold in his note-books made lists of books which he proposed to read in a given year, so here he has set down hints or titles for poems which he hoped to compose in 1849. One or two of the titles or catch-phrases may refer to poems already in existence, but the majority of them are hasty hints of poetic materials germinating in Arnold's mind. Some of these were never to develop; others, in altered or condensed form, seem to have found their place in poems for which they were not originally intended.

The entries are sometimes accompanied by sentences suggesting the substance of the poem-to-be. Thus 'Empedocles' is to illustrate the 'refusal of limitation by the religious sentiment.' Another, not necessarily of the same length and character as 'Empedocles,' is to illustrate the refusal of 'limitation by the sentiment of love,' glorious though love may be. These phrases, like all the titles which can be understood, reveal that 'high seriousness' and that 'criticism of life' to which Arnold's poetry was from its beginning dedicated.

The list, to the entries of which we have prefixed numbers for convenience of reference, is as follows.

Comp. 1849

Chew Lucretius

Compose

1. Empedocles—refusal of limitation by the religious sentiment.

2. Eugenia—refusal of do by the sentiment of love  
[the next word is illegible]



3. To Antonia—a system of the Universe.
4. To Meta—the cloister & life liveable
5. Kantire & the net driers
6. Thun & vividness of sight & memory compared: sight would be less precious if memory could equally realize for us.
7. An Eastern court—dancing—consciousness—one bayadère appearing behind the other.
8. Shelley—Spezzia—ah an eternal grief. The Alexandrian pessimism.
9. Narcissus—some wish to be thy lover.
10. 5 sonnets—outthunder—So far—When I have found.—It may be true that men *cannot* do the best they can *devise* [*desire*]: it is equally true they *have* never yet done it.—5—
11. —religious yearning—an education by a chapel—youth—marriage—children—death the religious longing never quenched.
12. The first mesmerist.
13. The bête northern invaders turned back by the iron shoe trick.

This list may be sub-divided into three classes:

- A. phrases or titles whose significance is clear;
- B. those whose significance entirely eludes us; and
- C. those whose significance is not beyond conjecture.

*Class A.* The words 'Chew Lucretius' plainly refer to the poet's proposed meditations on a poetic subject already determined. For his abortive labours on *Lucretius* see below, pp.340 ff.

1. *Empedocles*.

4. *To Meta*. This poem, discarded by Arnold, is printed below, pp.339-40. The only known version of it is that in

the Yale MS. It is related, of course, to the theme of 'The Grande Chartreuse.'

*Class B.* With the following phrases it is difficult to associate with confidence any known poem of Arnold's:

5. 'Kantire & the net driers.' The spelling of the proper name is uncertain. It may be Kantine or Kantive.

7. 'An Eastern court—dancing—consciousness—one bayadère appearing behind the other.' It is possible that Arnold had in mind such a poem as 'The New Sirens', or that this proposed piece was merged into that poem, an Oriental scene giving way to a Greek one.

9. 'Narcissus—some wish to be thy lover.' The reference is perhaps to some such intention as was afterwards realised in 'A Modern Sappho.'

13. 'The bête northern invaders turned back by the iron shoe trick.' The reference is to a story told in the *Saga of Ragnar Lodbrok*, in which the sons of Ragnar, after a triumphal career which leads them at last to the southland, aspire to reach Rome itself. They meet a traveller, with the iron soles of his shoes worn through and broken shoes hanging at his back, who tells them that both pairs had been new when he left Rome. Thereupon the invaders turn back.<sup>1</sup>

*Class C.*

2. 'Eugenia—refusal of [limitation] by the sentiment of love [the next word is illegible; many readers of the MS. have tried, vainly, to decipher it.]

The poem referred to is probably the one later called

<sup>1</sup> Professor Archibald A. Hill drew our attention to the source of this myth.

'Horatian Echo,' addressed 'to an ambitious friend,' and concerned with the limitations upon the human spirit by the love of woman and by the political world. Eugenia is twice mentioned in this ode. There is a possible connexion also with the poems about Marguerite.

3. 'To Antonia—a system of the Universe.' Antonia is nowhere mentioned in Arnold's poetry. The words 'system of the universe,' pretentious though they be, may apply to nothing more elaborate than 'In Utrumque Paratus,' a poem in the volume of 1849, or to the later 'Morality' (1852). To such poems Arnold referred in his later List (see below), when he used the phrase, 'world-religion stanzas.'

6. 'Thun & vividness of sight & memory compared: sight would be less precious if memory could equally realize for us.' The reference to Thun at once links this to the Marguerite poems, and the theme is certainly that of 'To my Friends, who ridiculed a Tender Leave-Taking,' with its closing counsel,

If the clear impression dies,  
Ah! the dim remembrance prize!

The title afterwards adopted, 'A Memory-Picture,' indicates more clearly the relation of the poem to the prose hint of it given in this list.

8. 'Shelley—Spezzia—ah an eternal grief. The Alexandrian pessimism.' It is of course possible that the hints for four short poems (a sonnet-sequence?) are here set down, or even four portions of a long poem (such as 'Obermann'); but a single stanza from the 'Grande Chartreuse' contains all that is necessary for the explanation of these notes:

What boots it, Shelley! that the breeze  
Carried thy lovely wail away,  
Musical through Italian trees  
Which fringe thy soft blue Spezzian bay?  
Inheritors of thy distress  
Have restless hearts one throb the less?

It may well be that the astringent effect of poetic composition reduced a larger plan to the compass of these six verses.

10. '5 sonnets—outthunder—So far—When I have found.—It may be true that men *cannot* do the best they can *devise* [*desire*]: it is equally true they *have* never yet done it.—5—'

The five members of a sonnet-sequence are here denoted, the *first* of which the poet indicates by the single word, 'outthunder,' which, since it does not occur in Arnold's poetry, is of no help in determining the meaning of this reference. There are only thirteen sonnets in the first two volumes, none of which is called to mind by this word.

The *second* member of the sequence is the sonnet later entitled, 'The World's Triumphs' (below, p.50), which begins, 'So far as I conceive the World's rebuke.'

The *third* sonnet is, pretty certainly, 'Youth's Agitations,' 'When I shall be divorced . . . From this poor present self,' an alternative reading for the first words as recorded in this list. 'Youth's Agitations' was printed beside 'The World's Triumphs' in the volume of 1852, and the two may represent all that 'A' succeeded in making of the intended sequence.

The subject of the *fourth* and *fifth* members of the sequence is sufficiently indicated by the sentence in the list. The sonnets seem never to have been composed.

11. '—religious yearning—an education by a chapel—youth—marriage—children—death the religious longing never quenched.'

It is tempting to associate the 'education by a chapel' with the

children rear'd in shade  
Beneath some old-world abbey wall,

who close 'A's' reflections at the Grande Chartreuse, and to find here another instance of condensation and absorption into a larger plan, such as occurred in the Shelleyan scheme (no.8). If this conjecture is correct, the larger plan of a poetic biography of some person, in whom the religious longing is never quenched, dropped out of the poet's mind. It is to be remembered, however, that such a versified biography seems to be beyond the scope of Arnold's interests and powers.

12. 'The first mesmerist' re-appears in List II as 'the wandering Mesmerist.' The reasons for associating these titles with 'The Scholar-Gipsy' are stated below (p.207).

#### LIST II 1851 ?

In the back of Arnold's copy of *Briefwechsel zwischen Schiller und Goethe*, Stuttgart und Tübingen, 1828, vol.2, occurs the following list of poems. Like that of 1849 it is a tentative table of contents for a projected volume of verse—that of 1852:

Empedocles.  
Tristram & Iseult.  
La châtelaine architecte

The Death of Sohrab  
Hylas  
? the wandering Mesmerist.  
Obermann Stanzas.  
world-religion stanzas  
short poems.

Compared with the earlier list, this is simple. The only title which eludes all explanation is 'Hylas.' 'La châtelaine architecte' is evidently an alternative title for 'The Church of Brou.' 'The Death of Sohrab' indicates that the material for 'Sohrab and Rustum' was taking form in Arnold's mind as early as 1851. The 'Mesmerist,' as we have tried to show (below p.207) was destined to develop into 'The Scholar-Gipsy.' The 'world-religion stanzas' refer to such poems as 'A Summer Night,' 'The Buried Life,' 'The Youth of Nature' (and its pendant 'The Youth of Man'), 'Morality,' 'Progress,' and 'The Future.'

Other lists of work to be composed are found in Arnold's note-books and are referred to frequently throughout our text.



## EARLY POEMS





## PREFATORY NOTE TO 'EARLY POEMS'

ARNOLD first made use of this category in the edition of 1877. In that of 1869 he had contented himself with a fourfold division into narrative, elegiac, dramatic, and lyric poems. The new group was, roughly, meant to include the contents of the volume of 1849 (*The Strayed Reveller, and Other Poems*), and much of the volume of 1852 (*Empedocles on Etna, and Other Poems*).

The poet found difficulty in being even reasonably consistent in assigning poems to this class. Early poems such as 'The Strayed Reveller' and 'The Forsaken Merman' were wanted elsewhere, in order to give balance and proportion to the scheme of classification. Moreover, he apparently wished to use the designation 'Early Poems' as a kind of apology for the immaturity of certain pieces. For this reason, no doubt, he classified 'The Church of Brou,' on account of its astonishing inaccuracies and its uneven quality, with the works of his youth, though it was probably contemporaneous in origin with 'Sohrab and Rustum,' and other poems which caused the author no misgivings.

The value of the poems in this first category is not noticeably below that of later work. In 'Mycerinus,' 'Resignation,' and 'The Forsaken Merman,' Arnold set for himself a standard to which he did not always, or perhaps often, attain. On the other hand, some of the poems do betray a 'prentice hand,' notably 'Stagyros' (written in 1844, when the poet was in his twenty-second year), 'The Second Best,' and 'To my Friends, who ridiculed a Tender Leave-Taking.' Traces of undergraduate reading and misconceptions may occasionally be found.

## QUIET WORK

In *The Strayed Reveller, and Other Poems*, 1849, this, the introductory poem, was entitled simply 'Sonnet.' Upon its next appearance, in the volume of 1853, it occupied a similar place, but was shifted to the left-hand page, so as not to interfere with the leading position of 'Sohrab and Rostum' in that volume; the title, 'Sonnet,' was dropped, and the whole was printed in italics so as to emphasize its significance as the motto of the whole book. In the two-volume edition of 1869, which had no special section of 'Early Poems,' it was the first in a group of sixteen sonnets and received for the first time the title, 'Quiet Work.' In his final arrangement Arnold restored it to its position as the first poem in the book, a distinction which it received in all later editions. It is clear that the poet regarded it as of primary importance with respect to his poetry and to his philosophy of life.

Among the many influences that may be detected here, such as that of Epictetus and of Wordsworth, Goethe's is certainly the chief. As Mr. H.W.Paul pointed out, the sonnet was suggested by Goethe's '*Ohne Hast, ohne Rast.*'<sup>1</sup>

The sonnets 'To a Republican Friend' are associated with this one. The 'thousand discords' and the 'fitful uproar' of a revolutionary age have to do only with the relative, not with the absolute life. (See p.32.)

<sup>1</sup> *Matthew Arnold*, London and New York, 1902, p.22.

The phrase is from the second part of the '*Zahme Xemen*':

*Wie das Gestirn,  
Ohne Hast,  
Aber ohne Rast,  
Drehe sich jeder  
Um die eigne Last.*

The sonnet underwent repeated change, without perhaps that improvement which might have been expected from such careful attention. Its first form, as printed in 1849, is so different from its final one that we here give the original version.

Two lessons, Nature, let me learn of thee—  
Two lessons that in every wind are blown;  
Two blending duties, harmonis'd in one,  
Though the loud world proclaim their enmity;  
Of toil unsever'd from tranquillity:  
Of labour, that in one short hour outgrows  
Man's noisy schemes, accomplish'd in repose,  
Too great for haste, too high for rivalry.  
Yes, while on earth a thousand discords ring,  
Man's weak complainings mingling with his toil,  
Still do thy sleepless ministers move on,  
Their glorious course in silence perfecting;  
Still working, chiding still our vain turmoil,  
Labourers that shall not fail, when man is gone.

#### TO A FRIEND

This sonnet, which first appeared in *The Strayed Reveller*, 1849, was reprinted in 1853, and in all subsequent editions. In 1869 the present annotation regarding the significance of the words 'Europe' and 'Asia' was added, the poet having hitherto contented himself with the footnote, 'Εὐρώπη,' as explanatory of 'The wide Prospect.' In 1877 the phrase, 'the muddy fens of the rivers' replaced 'fens of the marshy rivers'; otherwise there was no alteration in the diction of the sonnet or of the explanatory note. The poet made, as usual, many changes in punctuation as the various editions appeared.

The friend to whom the sonnet was addressed was probably Arthur Hugh Clough, to whom Arnold sent, in a letter written in August or early September, 1848, the last three lines of the octave.<sup>1</sup>

Wyndham Slade, Arnold's close friend, has written opposite this poem, in his own copy of the edition of 1853, 'P.Cumin,' as indicative of the person addressed. Slade's identifications in the poetry are hardly final, however, as he wrongly assigns the Fausta of 'Resignation' thus: 'Mrs. Twining?' It is certain that Fausta was Jane Arnold (see pp.63-4). Patrick Cumin was, of course, fairly close to Arnold at this time.

Arnold's continued devotion to Homer, Epictetus, and Sophocles is revealed in his note-books.

Arnold seems to have been untroubled by the jolting monosyllables of the octave, but the sestet makes amends for any roughness in the preceding portion. It contains a line as famous as any that he ever wrote, one which he later quoted with approval in his essay 'On the Modern Element in Literature' (1869) originally his inaugural lecture in the Poetry Chair at Oxford:

In Sophocles there is the same energy, the same maturity, the same freedom, the same intelligent observation [as in the body of the Athenians]; but all these idealized and glorified by the grace and light shed over them from the noblest poetical feeling. And therefore I have ventured to say of Sophocles, that he 'saw life steadily, and saw it whole.'<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Letters to Clough*, p.90.

<sup>2</sup> *Macmillan's Magazine*, VOL.XIX, February, 1869, p.309; reprinted in *Essays in Criticism*, Third Series, p.61.

## SHAKESPEARE

The manuscript of this sonnet, now in the British Museum, is dated August 1, 1844. It was, according to Mrs. Humphry Ward,<sup>1</sup> first written out in a letter addressed to the poet's sister, Jane.

It was first printed in *The Strayed Reveller*, 1849, and repeated whenever Arnold republished his earlier poems. It appeared, therefore, in some ten different editions during the poet's lifetime. In 1869 it was, rather oddly, placed among the Elegiac Poems of the first volume; at the same time the diction was altered, apparently to make the metaphor of the 'sovrán hill' more strictly consistent, but these changes were all discarded in 1877. The final form was adopted in the Selections of 1878.

The following pencilled note is in the Yale MS.: 'The easy tone of a Shakspeare suits the immoral-vulgar: the moralist conscious of his own imperfection & strain, admires it: but what does the poet's own conscience say to it—what would he say at seeing his easy morality erected by Germans & others into a system of life, & a thing to be held in view as an object for inward disciplining of oneself towards. He would say—You fools—I have walked thro: life *επι ξυρου ακμης* God knows how—if you mistake my razor edge, you damned pedants, for a bridge, a nice mess you will make of your own & others' walk & conversation.'

In much the same vein Arnold wrote to Clough at the end of 1847: 'I keep saying, Shakspeare, Shakspeare, you

1 *A Writer's Recollections*, London, 1918, p. 39.

are as obscure as life is: . . . Have I been inside you [Clough], or Shakspeare? Never.'<sup>2</sup>

The mood and ideas of Arnold's early poetry often reflect his reading of Emerson. The conception of over-towering, lonely genius here expressed is a familiar strain throughout Emerson's essays. At the close of his essay on 'Intellect,' for example, Emerson pays tribute to 'that lofty and sequestered class' [he is here speaking chiefly of philosophers] and 'the innocent serenity with which these babe-like Jupiters sit in their clouds, and from age to age prattle to each other, and to no contemporary. Well assured that their speech is intelligible, and the most natural thing in the world, they add thesis to thesis, without a moment's heed of the universal astonishment of the human race below, who do not comprehend their plainest argument; nor do they ever relent so much as to insert a popular or explaining sentence; nor testify the least displeasure or petulance at the dulness of their amazed auditory. The angels are so enamoured of the language that is spoken in heaven that they will not distort their lips with the hissing and unmusical dialects of men, but speak their own, whether there be any who understand it or not.'

The fifth line is a reminiscence, doubtless unconscious, of Cowper's familiar hymn, *Light shining out of darkness*, or 'God moves in a mysterious way,'

He plants his footsteps in the sea. <sup>3</sup>

<sup>2</sup> *Letters to Clough*, p.63.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Psalms 77.19.

## WRITTEN IN EMERSON'S ESSAYS

The earliest known draft of the poem is not written in a volume of Emerson's *Essays*,<sup>1</sup> but is in the Yale MS., where it is found pencilled upon a sheet containing other verses:

O monstrous, dead unprofitable world  
 That thou canst hear, and hearing <sup>hold</sup> thy way:  
 A voice oracular hath pealed to day—  
 To day a Hero's Banner is unfurled.  
 Hast thou no Lip for welcome. So I said—  
 Man after man, they smiled & passed on  
 A smile of mournful Incredulity  
 Each to his Labour. And when all were gone,  
 As tho men spake of life, a Joy  
 It chanced, I know not how, my ~~Dream~~ was fled:  
 So scornful seemed that smile, so strange, so full  
 Of bitter knowledge. Yet the will is free—  
 Strong is the Soul & fresh & beautiful—  
 The seeds of godlike Power are in us still—  
 Gods are we—Bards, Saints, Heroes—if we will—  
 O barren boast, o joyless Mockery.

The concluding line of this manuscript draft is not easily interpreted, but may be taken to renounce the 'boast' of the four lines preceding; whereas in the later version, in which dumb judges are bidden to speak, the implied meaning is, plainly, critical of the indifference of the world.

The First Series of Emerson's *Essays* appeared in 1841; the Second in 1844. As Arnold wrote a good deal of poetry in 1844, it is possible that he may here refer to the Second

1 At least the two volumes of Emerson which we have seen among Arnold's books bear no such inscription.



Series. The sonnet seems too mature to have been produced in 1841, when the poet was but eighteen years of age.

The sonnet, like the three preceding, is found in *The Strayed Reveller*, 1849; it was reprinted, practically without change, in 1853; but was dropped in 1854. It reappeared in 1877, after which time it was accepted as of the 'canon.'

The veneration of Emerson at Oxford in the 'forties—he was one of the four 'voices' then heard by the undergraduates—is found in Arnold's lecture on Emerson, printed in 1885 as one of the *Discourses in America*.

Arnold was attracted to Scherer's remark, *Il ne faut pas confondre l'éloquence avec la poésie*; but the fact remains that much of his own poetic inspiration was apparently derived from the moving and often florid style—quite as much as from the ideas—of Emerson, George Sand, and Senancour. In their soaring language, as in their thoughts, they remained for him 'the friends and aiders of those who would live in the spirit.'

#### WRITTEN IN BUTLER'S SERMONS

After its first appearance in 1849, this sonnet was discarded until 1877, when it was revived without alteration.

Upon leaving Oxford in 1718, Joseph Butler, later Bishop of Durham, was appointed at the age of twenty-six preacher of the Rolls Chapel, where he delivered his remarkable *Fifteen Sermons*, published in 1726. In his by no means unsympathetic 'Bishop Butler and the Zeit-Geist,' Arnold tells us that the *Sermons* were read at Oxford along with Aristotle's *Ethics*, 'with the same absolute

faith in the classicality of their matter as in the classicality of Homer's form.' <sup>1</sup> Thus the copy of the *Sermons* in which this youthful sonnet was supposedly written, may well have been a text-book.

In the poem Arnold shows impatience with the attempt of the eighteenth century to analyse human nature from a study of mankind in the closet. He is particularly concerned here with Butler's first three sermons, entitled collectively 'Upon Human Nature.' All man's principles and passions, instincts, impulses, and affections were, according to Butler's almost Newtonian system of moral philosophy, given to him by God for his own good and for the good of society, provided they were used at the discretion of man's dominating principle, which is his conscience, not his self-love as Hobbes would have had it. This view of the presiding conscience may, curiously enough, be the germ of Arnold's more poetic 'one nature,' which sits queen-like on her shadowy throne, 'centred in a majestic unity.'

The image of the coral islands joined beneath the sea appears in somewhat altered form in Arnold's later love poem, 'To Marguerite—continued,' from 'Switzerland.' The image is also used in Arthur Hugh Clough's early poem, 'Truth is a golden thread,' composed in 1838.

#### TO THE DUKE OF WELLINGTON

This poem, with sub-title 'On Hearing Him Mispraised,' was rejected after 1849, but restored in 1877.

Wellington had frequently made himself unpopular by his unwavering policy of sacrificing political and class

<sup>1</sup> *Last Essays on Church and Religion*, pp.63-4.

loyalties to what seemed to him, on any given occasion, the practical interests of his Queen and country. His support of Sir Robert Peel in the fight over the Corn Laws in 1846 had alienated him from many of his Tory friends. In 1848, of course, he had shown his dislike for revolutionary and liberal movements—both those upon the Continent and those at home—and had assumed command of London's military preparations against the Chartists.

#### IN HARMONY WITH NATURE

The sonnet first appeared in the volume of 1849 with the title,

To an Independent Preacher

Who Preached that we should be 'in harmony with Nature.'

Arnold's dissatisfaction with the sonnet is revealed by its absence from the volumes of 1853, 1854, 1857, and 1869. It was reprinted, with its present title, in the volume of 1877, in which the contents and text of the Early Poems were settled, somewhat as they were finally left. No alteration, other than the usual changes in punctuation, was made in the text.

Since Arnold's exaltation of Nature and her influence on Man often rises to a Wordsworthian fervour, the sonnet may at first seem somewhat inconsistent. The poem reads very like an answer to 'Quiet Work'; but the thought of Man as in strange spiritual isolation amid his 'natural' environment is found in 'Dover Beach,' 'Morality,' and other poems. Its conclusion that 'man must begin, know this, where Nature ends' is exactly in keeping, moreover, with

the marked 'humanism' of Arnold's later prose writings, notably, the famous passage from 'The Literary Influence of Academies': 'Man alone of living creatures, he [Cicero] says, goes feeling after "*quid sit ordo, quid sit quod deceat, in factis dictisque qui modus*"—the discovery of an *order*, a law of *good taste*, a *measure* for his words and actions. Other creatures submissively follow the law of their nature; man alone has an impulse leading him to set up some other law to control the bent of his nature.'<sup>1</sup> And as late as 1883, Arnold enters in his note-books this sentence from Johnson's *Rasselas*: 'To man is permitted the contemplation of the skies, but the practice of virtue is commanded.'

Professor J.W.Beach suggests that the doctrine of this sonnet is identical with Goethe's in '*Das Göttliche*.' He remarks that both poems 'illustrate equally well the ambiguity inherent in the use of the word *nature* unless it is carefully defined.' The two poets are here using this word 'to designate the "world of things" as opposed to the moral world of man; whereas it is often used to designate the natural order which includes man and his moral world together with the world of things.'<sup>2</sup> We have failed to identify the 'preacher,' who may possibly be an imaginary figure constructed to express views diametrically opposed to the poet's.

'Rude Orator,' a fragmentary poem in blank verse, may be found in the Appendix to this volume, among the Unpublished Poems.<sup>3</sup> Its theme is not wholly dissimilar to that of this sonnet.

1 *Essays in Criticism* [First Series], 1865, p.47.

2 *The Concept of Nature in Nineteenth-Century English Poetry*, New York, 1936.

3 *Infra*, pp.336-7.

## TO GEORGE CRUIKSHANK

This sonnet in the volume of 1849 was regularly reprinted, but in 1869 (only) was entitled, 'Human Limits.' It was included in the first edition of the *Selections*, but omitted from the second. The sub-title, 'On Seeing, in the Country, his Picture of "The Bottle,"' refers to Cruikshank's recent publication:

*The Bottle.* In eight plates, by George Cruikshank. Price one shilling. Published for the artist, by D. Bogue, London; Wiley and Putnam, New York; and J. Sands, Sydney, New South Wales. N.B.—An edition on fine paper, imperial folio, with a tint. Price six shillings.

There are eight plates, the last of which bears the words, 'Designed and etched by George Cruikshank, 1847.' The sentences under the respective pictures are the only letter-press in the volume; that under the last drawing is, 'The bottle has done its work—it has destroyed the infant and the mother, it has brought the son and the daughter to vice and to the streets, and has left the father a hopeless maniac.' The pictures were also printed on single sheets (though we have failed to discover a copy), so that they might be hung up on walls.

## TO A REPUBLICAN FRIEND, 1848

The three sonnets to a 'Republican Friend' have always been printed as a group, save in the edition of 1869, where 'Religious Isolation' was cut off from the other two (in order that 'East London' and 'West London' might stand opposite each other as a pair), and in the *Selections* of 1879, from which it was excluded. The date was affixed to the title in 1853.

The friend addressed is Clough, an enthusiast for the 'blessed revolutions' on the Continent. On March 1, 1848, Arnold wrote to him, 'Certainly the present spectacle in France is a fine one: mostly so indeed to the historical swift-kindling man, who is not over-haunted by the pale thought, that, after all man's shiftings of posture, *restat vivere*.'<sup>1</sup> An envelope, post-marked March 7, 1848, has survived, addressed in Arnold's hand to 'Citizen Clough, Oriel Lyceum, Oxford.'<sup>2</sup> As a result of this jest, Clough tells Thomas Arnold, on July 16, of the same year, he bears that title at Oriel College, '*par excellence*.'<sup>3</sup>

On March 10, of this year, Arnold wrote to his sister Jane (afterwards Mrs. Forster) commending the intelligence of the 'idea-moved masses' of France in contrast to the 'insensible masses' of England and the 'intolerable *laideur* of the well-fed American masses.'<sup>4</sup> This is perhaps as far as he ever went in giving approval to revolutionary doctrine.

Arnold's ever-growing enthusiasm for France—for the 'free play of the mind' and the unquestioned superiority of French criticism, as well as for the achievements of 'equality' among the French people—never blinded him to her secondary place in the strictly creative sphere. He saw, moreover, the faults of France as he saw those of England. The judgement passed upon France, 'famed in all great arts, in none supreme,' reveals, of course, his failure to appreciate the prime value of Gothic architecture as developed in France; but his interest in the art of building was

<sup>1</sup> *Letters to Clough*, p. 68.

<sup>2</sup> Yale Papers.

<sup>3</sup> *Prose Remains*, London, 1888, p. 137.

<sup>4</sup> *Letters* I, 5-6.

never conspicuous. The anti-Gallican sentiment here expressed is influenced, too, by Wordsworth's sonnet written in 1802, 'Great men have been among us,' in which France is said to have

No single volume paramount, no code,  
No master spirit, no determined road,  
But equally a want of books and men.

Arnold's sentiment must not, however, be dismissed as merely imitative or second-hand, for in the letter to his sister referred to above, he writes,

But I do not say that these people in France have much dreamed of the deepest wants of men, or are likely to enlighten the world much on the subject, and I do not wonder at Guizot, who is an austere serious man, rather despising them.

In his review of Renan's *Réforme intellectuelle et morale de la France* (1871), he reiterated and defended his dogmatic assertion:

A nation's intellectual place depends upon its having reached the very highest rank in the very highest lines of spiritual endeavour; this is what in the end makes its ideal; this is what fixes its scale of intellectual judgment, and what it counts by in the world. More than twenty years ago we said, lovers of France as we are, and abundant and brilliant as is her work of a lower order than the very highest:—

'France, famed in all great arts, *in none supreme*;'—

and this still seems to us to be the true criticism on her.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>5</sup> *Every Saturday*, n.s. VOL.I., March 23, 1872, p.318. *Essays in Criticism*, Third Series, pp.173-4.

In 1885 he again outlined the shortcomings of his beloved France in his essay on 'Numbers.' He quotes, with obvious satisfaction, Sainte-Beuve's praise of him as an initiate in French culture, and asserts that 'to France' he has always felt himself 'powerfully drawn,' but adds:

The highest art, the art which by its height, depth, and gravity possesses religiousness,—such as the Greeks had, the art of Pindar and Phidias; such as the Italians had, the art of Dante and Michael Angelo,—this art, with the training which it gives and the standard which it sets up, the French have never had.<sup>6</sup>

The three sonnets form a genuine sequence, the thought culminating in the 'holy secret' that man's distinction in the material universe points also to his duty there, which is obedience to the 'inward light.'

### MYCERINUS

This is the second poem in *The Strayed Reveller, and Other Poems*, 1849, immediately following the introductory sonnet; it was reprinted in 1853 and in all subsequent editions of the collected poems.

The entire passage from Herodotus, which was but hastily summarized by Arnold, contains minor details which the poet rejected from his plan:

After the grievous death of his daughter, it next happened to Mycerinus that an oracle was sent to him from the city of Buto, declaring that he had but six years to live and must die in the seventh. The king deemed this unjust, and sent back to the oracle a message of reproach, blaming the god: why must he die so soon who was pious, whereas his father and his uncle had lived long, who shut up

<sup>6</sup> *Discourses in America*, p. 50.



the temples, and regarded not the gods, and destroyed men? But a second utterance from the place of divination declared to him that his good deeds were the very cause of shortening his life; for he had done what was contrary to fate; Egypt should have been afflicted for an hundred and fifty years, whereof the two kings before him had been aware, but not Mycerinus. Hearing this, he knew that his doom was fixed. Therefore he caused many lamps to be made, and would light these at nightfall and drink and make merry; by day or night he never ceased from reveling, roaming to the marsh country and the groves and wherever he heard of the likeliest places of pleasure. Thus he planned, that by turning night into day he might make his six years into twelve and so prove the oracle false.<sup>1</sup>

Complaint has sometimes been made that the meaning of 'Mycerinus' is not clear, since the poet expresses no disapproval of the young king's abandonment of his duty, and seems to sympathize with the devotion of his six remaining years to revelry. But the treatment of the story is not inconsistent with other poems of Arnold. The king's retirement from the world may be compared with the Scholar Gipsy's, and his determination to attain to a state of mind in which his brow shall be smooth and his mirth enduring, in spite of the menace of Fate, is in harmony with the whole tendency of Arnold's life. Self-knowledge may be achieved in the cool region of the groves along the river-bank more readily than in the feverish life of the court and the capital:

It may be on that joyless feast his eye  
Dwelt with mere outward seeming; he, within,  
Took measure of his soul, and knew its strength,  
And by that silent knowledge, day by day,  
Was calm'd, ennobled, comforted, sustain'd.

x Book II §133. The translation is that of A. D. Godley in the Loeb Classical Library.

The voice which crosses the feast of Mycerinus may be associated with the 'slow-rolling word' of the white-robed slave in 'The World and the Quietist.'

The description of the blind indifference of the gods may have been in part suggested by Tennyson's 'Lotos-Eaters,'<sup>2</sup> which itself betrays the influence of Lucretius. John Duke Coleridge thought he saw in stanzas 6-8 and 12-13 of 'Mycerinus' 'an imitation of the majestic music of Wordsworth's "Laodamia" by one who has felt the beauty of that poem and has aimed at repeating its effects.'<sup>3</sup> It is also noticeable, with respect to the meaning of the whole poem, that the 'blind Power' of the first edition (lines 36ff.) becomes in the final revision a Force 'too wise, too strong' even for gods to conquer. The whole conception is prophetic of 'Empedocles on Etna.'

#### THE CHURCH OF BROU

The first reference to this poem occurs in the list of titles evidently intended for Arnold's second volume, which he jotted down on a fly-leaf at the back of *Briefwechsel zwischen Schiller und Goethe*, volume two.<sup>1</sup> Its title here is 'La châtelaine architecte.'

'The Church of Brou,' though later classed as an early poem, did not appear until the volume of 1853, where it followed 'Tristram and Iseult,' to which it bears obvious stylistic resemblances.<sup>2</sup> It occupied a similar position in the volume of 1869; but in 1877, as a result of the criticism

<sup>2</sup> Lines 110ff of the 'Choric Song.'

<sup>3</sup> Review in the *Christian Remembrancer*, VOL. XXVII., April, 1854, p. 312

<sup>1</sup> See pp. 16-17.

<sup>2</sup> See pp. 115-16

directed at its many inaccuracies, the poet discarded the first two parts, and retained the third as an independent poem with the title, 'A Tomb among the Mountains.' Here it appears at the end of a group of Narrative Poems. In 1881 the poem was permitted to re-assume its original tripartite form, but was thereafter classed among the Early Poems. 'A Tomb among the Mountains' was never reprinted as an independent poem, though it may stand alone, without loss, as the part of the poem generally considered the best.

Sir Edward Cook gives the following reason for the treatment of the poem just described:

'Matthew Arnold told me himself'—so Mr. Oscar Browning wrote to me—"that the reason why he omitted "The Church of Brou" from his Collected Works [1877] was because he found that he had described it wrongly.' It appears from his *Letters* that he passed through Bourg in 1858, but he did not stop to see the Church.<sup>3</sup>

The case against 'The Church of Brou' was pungently set forth by P. G. Hamerton in 1878.<sup>4</sup> After a long quotation from the poem, he proceeds,

The poem from which these extracts are made is very beautiful, and I would not have it otherwise than as it is; yet what amazing topography, especially amazing in dealing with a subject which is strictly historical and strictly local! The church of Brou is not in the mountains at all, but in the low country, six miles from the first rise of the Jura hills, and the scenery about it is that of the great plain of La Bresse. I know the church well. There is no leaping stream near it, nor are there any sun-proof pines. There is no climbing up to it, the road is good and nearly level. The church

3 *Literary Recreations*, London, 1919, p.295, n 1

4 See his *Life of J. M. W. Turner*, London, 1879, p.86.

does not stand on high. The tomb of the Duchess Marguerite is not 'in the nave' at all, it is on the right-hand side of the choir. So far from being aloof from men, the church is within half a mile of an ancient town (Bourg en Bresse), which has now 11,000 inhabitants, with an old church of its own; and it so happens, that while that of Brou was building there was a bishop at Bourg, and the old church there was a cathedral. It is not probable that the burghers and dames came from Chambéry to service at Brou, seeing that Chambéry is more than a hundred kilometres from Brou—too much for a Sunday morning's ride.

Nor is this all. The recumbent statues in the church adorn separate tombs.<sup>5</sup> Philibert the Fair, whose name the poet did not know, died in 1504 of a pulmonary disease contracted while hunting, and not from a boar-wound. There was no Duchess Maud, but rather an earlier Duchess Margaret of Bourbon (died 1483), mother of Philibert, who had made a vow to build a convent under the Benedictine rule to commemorate her own husband's recovery from an injury received in hunting.

In 'A Tomb among the Mountains' Arnold evidently hoped to evade these discrepancies by avoiding the mention of Brou or of Chambéry and by dropping the names of the duchesses. The poet later came to feel, no doubt, that he had been over-sensitive with respect to the 'inaccuracies' in the poem, which could be paralleled in the work of far greater poets than he, and he therefore restored the poem to its original form.

Arnold's misapprehensions with regard to the forest, the church on the hill, the violent death of the young duke, and the position of the tombs in the church are all ac-

<sup>5</sup> Arnold must have had in mind such a tomb as that of Francis II. of Brittany and the Duchess Marguerite (carved by Michel Colombe about 1502) in the nave of the Cathedral of Nantes.

counted for by the statements or implications in the source from which he drew, Edgar Quinet's essay, '*Des Arts de la Renaissance et de l'Église de Brou,*' written in December, 1834 and published in 1839.<sup>6</sup>

One passage in Quinet's essay is so important in accounting for the poet's inspiration that it may very probably seem to the interested reader to reveal not only the inception of the whole poem; but also an indebtedness, extending even to particular phrases, which the poet who so greatly wished the infusion of French literature into England might have done well to acknowledge:

*Qui pourrait raconter leurs songes plus blancs que l'albâtre des tombeaux? Quand leurs froides paupières se soulèvent, ils voient les arceaux sur leurs têtes, la lumière transfigurée des vitraux, la Vierge et les Saintes immobiles à leurs places; et ils pensent en eux-mêmes: c'est ici l'éternité. Ils n'entendent pas l'orage qui ébranle au dehors la foi sur son pilier; ils se prennent, malgré leurs durs chevets, à rêver de duchés, de vassaux, de blasons qui rayonnent, de marguerites de marbre qu'ils effeuillent dans leurs mains de marbre; et quand le vent fait gémir les portes, ils murmurent entre eux: Qu'avez-vous, mon âme, pour soupirer si haut? et quand la pluie creuse le toit sur leurs têtes, ils se disent: Entendez-vous aussi sur votre dais la pluie de l'éternel Amour? <sup>7</sup>*

Arnold might have been spared many of the attacks upon the poem had he avoided the topographical manner,

6 Edgar Quinet, *Œuvres complètes*, Paris, 1857, 'Mélanges,' pp.351ff. Professor Lewis Knapp has shown us that Arnold's indebtedness to the essay was first pointed out by W. Knox Johnson in the *Athenæum*, April 18, 1903, p.499. It was again indicated by Charles Cestre in the *Revue Germanique*, VOL.IV., 1908, pp.526-38.

7 Other vivid details are from the same source, as, e.g.: The Flemish carvers of Part 1. 1.15: Cf. Quinet, '*Les ouvriers arrivent de Toscane, de Nuremberg, d'Angleterre, de Suisse. Les Allemands apportent le génie du symbole et du mystère; les Italiens, les ornements de la renaissance; les Flamands le goût des intérieurs domestiques; les Suisses des Alpes, l'industrie des détails et leurs rocs d'albâtre ciselés et brochés*' The 'old architect' of line 18 is also from Quinet, '*Elle conduit elle-même la main de son vieil architecte aveugle.*'

and written imaginatively. Readers naturally assumed that he knew all about the actual edifice at Brou, and the facts relating to its origin. Had he omitted or altered all the definite topographical references, nobody would have accused him of misapprehending or falsifying the facts. Yet it was perhaps foolish to attempt to suppress his errors after the poem was in print. His practice is no more reprehensible than that of the dramatist who referred placidly to the sea-coast of Bohemia and to an Island of Delphi, and built up greatest things from least suggestion.

#### A MODERN SAPPHO

The history of this poem well illustrates how Arnold dealt with lyrics which had their origin (real or imaginative) in affairs of the heart. In his first volume 'A Modern Sappho' immediately preceded 'The New Sirens,' and followed 'To my Friends, who ridiculed a Tender Leave-Taking,' with the latter of which it would seem to have some natural connexion, and, perhaps, even a common origin. In 1853 it was separated from these two lyrics, but kept near to 'Switzerland.' It was then rejected altogether, till 1869, when it was classed as an elegy. In 1877 it was placed among the Early Poems, and given its present initial position among the poems of passion.

In 1849 and 1853, the following stanza, afterwards permanently discarded, came between what are now the second and third stanzas:

Is it hope makes me linger? the dim thought, that sorrow  
Means parting? that only in absence lies pain?  
It was well with me once if I saw him: to-morrow  
May bring one of the old happy moments again.

The attempt to identify the 'modern Sappho' with Marguerite requires evidence which cannot at present be supplied and which may very probably never be found; but it may be pointed out that the house and the lawn stretching down to the river are the characteristic scenery of the Switzerland series. In any case the unusual feature of this lyric is the attempt of the poet to place himself in the woman's circumstances.

#### REQUIESCAT

'Requiescat' was first printed in the volume of 1853. Arnold's reason for ultimately (1877) classifying it with the Early Poems is not clear. The poet never revealed the name of the person whose death brought forth this the most beautiful and popular of his short lyrics. Little would be gained by any exact identification. She may be, like Wordsworth's 'Lucy,' a merely ideal figure.

There is a temptation to think, in connexion with Arnold's poem, not merely of the 'Lucy' poems, but also of both the words and the metre of the exquisite lyric from *The Maid's Tragedy*, 'Lay a garland on my hearse.'

The text of the poem was, happily, left unchanged during its frequent reprintings.

#### YOUTH AND CALM

'Youth and Calm' was, on its first appearance (1852), the second paragraph of a poem entitled, 'Lines written by a Death-Bed.' When the poem was reprinted in 1867, Arnold discarded the first sixteen lines:

Yes, now the longing is o'erpast,  
Which, dogg'd by fear and fought by shame,  
Shook her weak bosom day and night,  
Consum'd her beauty like a flame,  
And dimm'd it like the desert blast.  
And though the curtains hide her face,  
Yet were it lifted to the light  
The sweet expression of her brow  
Would charm the gazer, till his thought  
Eras'd the ravages of time,  
Fill'd up the hollow cheek, and brought  
A freshness back as of her prime—  
So healing is her quiet now.  
So perfectly the lines express  
A placid, settled loveliness;  
Her youngest rival's freshest grace.

These lines were at least equal in value to those which followed, and the poet's reason for rejecting them is not at first apparent. After 1877 the poem was regularly coupled with 'Requiescat,' so that it is natural to assume that both refer to the same death. Arnold may well have felt that the opening passage, just quoted, inevitably challenged comparison with the beauty of 'Requiescat.' By sacrificing these lines he took from the poem all trace of any close connexion with the theme of 'Requiescat.'

The poem, dated December 28, 1851, is found in Rotha Quillinan's album, but there it is already separated from the lines that had formerly constituted the first paragraph. In the album the first four lines of the final version are also omitted; the first line of the manuscript reads:

—Yet ah, is Calm alone, in truth,



to mark a complete divorce from the first part of the version originally printed.<sup>1</sup>

Unwilling to sacrifice the cancelled sixteen lines, Arnold thrust them, as late as 1869, into the middle of 'Tristram and Iseult,' where they become part of the meditation on the dead queen. The 'curtains' hiding the face of the dead (line 6) become 'bed-clothes' in 'Tristram and Iseult.'

### A MEMORY-PICTURE

This frequently altered poem was printed first in the volume of 1849 under the title, 'To my Friends, who ridiculed a Tender Leave-Taking.' In 1853 it opened the series which was then first called 'Switzerland.' In 1869 the first two stanzas were cancelled, and the poem entitled 'A Memory-Picture'; at the same time an important alteration (in the interests of good taste) was made in the refrain.

In the edition of 1877, the poem ceased to have any connexion with 'Switzerland,' and was classed simply as an 'early poem'; in the same edition the first stanza, but not the second, was restored.

This is the first poem in which Marguerite is mentioned by name. The identity of the derisive friends is not to be determined; they may be the 'Olivia' and 'Martin' of 'A Dream.'

The cancelled stanza, which for twenty years was the second in the poem, read,

1 The late Mr. Gordon Wordsworth, grandson of the poet, showed us the manuscript album (see also pp 221, 229) and its several entries by Arnold. We make use of this material by his permission. The album is now in the W. Wordsworth Museum at Grasmere.

But my Youth reminds me—"Thou  
Hast liv'd light as these live now:  
As these are, thou too wert such:  
Much hast had, hast squander'd much".  
Fortune's now less frequent heir,  
Ah! I husband what's grown rare.  
Ere the parting kiss be dry,  
Quick, thy tablets, Memory!

## A DREAM

From 1853 on through the next two editions, 'A Dream' was the third poem in the series entitled 'Switzerland.' But from the collected editions of 1869 and 1877 it was rejected altogether, reappearing only in 1881, when it was assigned a place among the Early Poems.

Olivia and Martin, if they are real people, have never been identified; but the scenery is clearly that of Thun and the Aar valley.

## THE NEW SIRENS

This poem, which appeared in the first volume, 1849, was revived by the poet in 1876, and reprinted in *Macmillan's Magazine* for December of that year, with the following prefatory note:

I shall not, I hope, be supposed unconscious that in coherency and intelligibility the following poem leaves much to be desired. It was published in 1849 in a small volume without my name, was withdrawn along with that volume, and until now has never been reprinted. But the departed poem had the honour of being followed by the regrets of a most distinguished mourner, Mr. Swinburne,

who has more than once revived its memory, and asked for its republication. Mr. Swinburne's generosity towards contemporary verse is well known; and *The New Sirens* may have won his favour the more readily because it had something, perhaps, of that animation of movement and rhythm of which his own poems offer such splendid examples. In addition to Mr. Swinburne, the poem has had also several other friends, less distinguished, who desired its restoration. To a work of his youth, a work produced in long-past days of ardour and emotion, an author can never be very hard-hearted; and after a disappearance of more than twenty-five years, *The New Sirens*, therefore, is here reprinted. M.A.

In a letter to his mother, dated Harrow, June 26, 1869, Arnold remarked, 'Swinburne writes to urge me to reprint the "New Sirens," but I think that had better wait for a posthumous collection.'<sup>1</sup>

Tom Arnold, writing to his mother from New Zealand in August, 1849, speaks of his brother's new volume of poems: 'It was very pleasant to recognise old friends, especially the "New Sirens."'<sup>2</sup> Tom Arnold left England in November, 1847. His remark implies, at least, a fairly early date for the poem and lends a literal support to Matthew Arnold's own reference to it as a 'work of his youth.' It suggests that the poem should not be connected, as it has been by some critics, with the Marguerite episode.

In the magazine, as in the volume of 1849, the poem was called 'A Palinode,' that is, a poem in which the author retracts something said in an earlier one. In this regard it is perhaps significant that, in the first edition, 'The New Sirens' followed 'A Modern Sappho.' After the magazine appearance, the poem ceased to be called 'A Palinode,' but

<sup>1</sup> *Letters* II 15.

<sup>2</sup> Printed with the permission of Miss Dorothy Ward, Arnold's grand-niece.

in all its reappearances was associated with the other lyrics of passion, characteristic of those 'days of ardour and emotion' to which the poet refers in the prefatory note, but of which we know only what may be deduced from the internal evidence of the lyrics.

Arnold himself acknowledges the incoherence of the poem; but though it is difficult to follow its development through its various stages, the meaning is made clear at the end,

Shall I seek, that I may scorn her,  
Her I loved at eventide?  
Shall I ask, what faded mourner  
Stands, at daybreak, weeping by my side?

In a letter to Clough, written, probably, in March, 1849, the poet speaks of the attitude of his friends towards the recently-published volume of verse: 'Cumin also advises a running commentary for the New Sirens: and Shairp finds them cloudy and obscure: and they are, what you called them, a mumble.'<sup>3</sup>

In the next letter Arnold proceeds to supply such an abstract, to which any editorial addition would be impertinent:

A lawn stretching away in front of the palace of the New Sirens, dotted with pines and cedars, and with glimpses to the right and left over the open country. Time evening.

The speaker (one of a band of poets) stands under a cedar, newly awakened from a sleep: the New Sirens are seen round about in their bowers in the garden, dejected.

He addresses them, saying he has dreamed they were = the Sirens the fierce sensual lovers of antiquity.

3 *Letters to Clough*, p. 104.

Yet, he says, this romantic place, and the multitude and distinction of your worshippers some of them attracted from the service of the spirit by you, seem to indicate a higher worth in you. Are you then really something better and more lawfully attractive than the old Sirens?

—oh, he continues, I perceive the change that gives you an advantage over them. Your love is romantic, and claims to be a satisfying of the spirit.

And, he says, I cannot argue against you: for when about to do so, the remembrance of your beauty and life as I witnessed it at sunrise on these lawns occupies my mind, and stops my mouth.

—Yes, he continues, that was glorious: and if that could have lasted, or if we were so made as not to feel that it did not last—(aposiopesis)

—But, soon after the life and enjoyment I witnessed in you at day-break, a languor fell upon you as the day advanced: the weather clouded, your happy groups were broken up, and in lassitude and ennui you dispersed yourselves thro: the gardens, and threw yourselves dispiritedly down in your bowers where at evening I now see you.

—Does the remembrance of your vivacity of this morning suffice to console you in the void and weariness of the afternoon and evening? or do your thoughts revert to that life of the spirit to which, like me, you were once attracted, but which, finding it hard and solitary, you soon abandoned for the vehement emotional life of passion as ‘the new Sirens?’

What, he says, without reply, I see you rise and leave your bowers, and re-enter your palace. And yet do not be angry with me: for I would gladly find you in the right and myself, with my conscientious regrets after the spiritual life, wrong.

(They have re-entered the palace, and night falls)

—That is right, he continues, away with ennui, and let joy revive amidst light and dancing.

—But, (after a pause he continues), I, remaining in the dark and cold under my cedar, and seeing the blaze of your revel in the distance, do not share your illusions: and ask myself whether this

*alternation* of ennui and excitement is worth much? whether it is in truth a very desirable life?

And, he goes on, were this *alternation* of ennui and excitement the best discoverable existence, yet it cannot last: time will destroy it: the time will come, when the elasticity of the spirits will be worn out, and nothing left but weariness.

(This epoch is described under the figure of morning but all this latter part you say is clear to you).

Arnold then adds:

But your word is quite just—it is exactly a mumble—and I have doctored it so much and looked at it so long that I am now powerless respecting it.

The poem has sometimes, notably by Mr. Herbert Paul,<sup>4</sup> been compared to Mrs. Browning's 'Wine of Cyprus,' published in 1844; but though there is a striking similarity of metre and verse-form, and though both lyrics deal with a Greek subject, there is no general resemblance in tone or theme.

#### THE VOICE

This poem, from Arnold's first volume, was not reprinted till 1877, when it was revived for insertion in the group of Early Poems. The voice may possibly be that of Marguerite, as Mrs. Sells suggests, but it is a matter of sheer conjecture. Wyndham Slade's copy has, for example, opposite line 29 ('O unforgotten voice,' etc.) 'His father.'

The lyric, like 'A Question' (p.53), betrays the influence of Shelley.

<sup>4</sup> *Matthew Arnold*, p.27.

## YOUTH'S AGITATIONS

This is one of the five sonnets ('When I have found'), in Arnold's list of poems to be composed in 1849. See above, pp.12,15.

In the volume of 1852 this was entitled simply 'Sonnet'; it was called 'Youth's Agitations' in 1867, when it was significantly placed between 'Youth and Calm' and 'Growing Old.' In 1877 it became one of the Early Poems. The diction remained unaltered.

## THE WORLD'S TRIUMPHS

Another of the five sonnets ('So far'), in the list of poems to be composed in 1849. The manuscript is on the inside front cover of Eckermann's *Gespräche mit Goethe*, VOL.III., Magdeburg, 1848, a book in the possession of Professor Arnold Whitridge, grandson of the poet.

In the volumes of 1853, 1854, and 1857, this was the last of the group of sonnets. In 1869 it was placed opposite 'Youth's Agitations,' as though to suggest that the two were a pair, a relation that was continued in 1877 and the later collected editions. The diction remained unaltered after publication.

## STAGIRIUS

The manuscript of these verses, a single sheet, written on both sides, signed and dated, 'M.A.1844,' is among the Yale Papers. The sheet is watermarked 1838.

In the manuscript the verses have no title; when, five

years after their composition, they were included in the volume of 1849, they were entitled 'Stagyrus,' but with no explanatory note. In the volume of 1855, the poem was entitled 'Desire.' In 1877 the old title was resumed, but the spelling was altered to the more correct form, 'Stagirius,' and the note added in the edition of 1877, when the verses were reprinted after an interval of twenty-two years. The poet was sufficiently satisfied with the lyric to include it in the Selections of 1878.

It is difficult to avoid the suspicion that the lines were originally written with no thought of Stagirius in mind, since there is nothing specific in the text to indicate any connexion with the young and melancholy monk to whom St. Chrysostom addressed himself. Resemblances of a more general kind, however, are not wanting.

St. Chrysostom recognizes and illustrates the recurring sense that God is afar off, and favours the unjust while neglecting the faithful '*qui totis ei viribus serviunt.*'<sup>1</sup> He recognizes that 'doubt is double,'<sup>2</sup> and illustrates from the life of Abraham how comfort may 'turn to trouble.'<sup>3</sup> He knows also the attack of 'the arch-fiend Pride.'<sup>4</sup> Nevertheless in this rather incoherent and prosaic litany Arnold does scant justice to the Christian conception of the Word made flesh and of a God who, far from 'dwelling alone,' has his tabernacle among men.

1 'Ad Stagirium,' Book I. Section 5.

2 II.6.

3 II.7.

4 I.9; and see III 14



## HUMAN LIFE

First printed in 1852, this poem was not revived until 1867, when it was given to the world as one of the New Poems. In 1877 it was classed as an early poem.

It is possible that Arnold's phrase, 'world-religion stanzas,' used in the list mentioned above (p.17) had reference to his intention to write lyrics such as this, 'In Utrumque Paratus,' and similar poems in the volume of 1852.

The final stanza reads like a reminiscence of Clough's '*Qua Cursum Ventus*,' which appeared in *Ambarvalia* (1849).

## TO A GIPSY CHILD BY THE SEA-SHORE

The poem was originally entitled, in the table of contents to the volume of 1849, 'Stanzas on a Gipsy Child by the Sea-Shore, Douglas, Isle of Man.' Arnold's pocket almanac for 1845 (among the Yale Papers) records his presence in the Isle of Man from July 9 to August 9.

In the volume of 1849 the poem was followed immediately by 'The Hayswater Boat' and 'The Forsaken Mer-man,' with which it seems to form a trio of poems in romantic mood. In these lines the gipsy makes his first appearance in the poetry of Arnold, and is here, as in 'The Scholar-Gipsy,' a solitary figure.

The poem, altered slightly in diction, was reprinted in 1855. In 1869 it was classed as an elegy, and given a place between 'Rugby Chapel' and 'Requiescat.' The first stanza was cancelled, and the next four were rewritten as follows:

The port lies bright under the August sun,  
Gay shine the waters and the cluster'd pier;  
Blithely, this morn, old Ocean's work is done,  
And blithely do these sea-birds hover near.

Poor child, whom the light air of childish joy  
Wafts not from thine own thoughts—of graver strain,  
Surely, than those which should thine age employ—  
A weight of meditation mixt with pain!

Blithe all else stirs, thou stirrest not!—averse  
From thine own mother's breast, that knows not thee,  
With eyes which seek thine eyes thou dost converse,  
And thy dark mournful vision rests on me.

Glooms that go deep as thine I have not known,  
Moods of fantastic sadness, nothing worth!  
Musings, that ere they could grow ripe were flown,  
And grief that heal'd at every smile of earth.

On June 26, 1869, Arnold wrote to his mother, 'I suppose I must change back the "Gipsy Child" to its old form, as no one seems to like the new one.'<sup>1</sup> Accordingly in the volume of 1877, the poem was restored pretty much to its original form, and included among the group of Early Poems, where it was thenceforth permitted to remain.

### A QUESTION

This poem from Arnold's first volume, was entitled 'A Question' only in 1877; in 1849 it was called simply 'To Fausta.' It was not reprinted in the interval. For 'Fausta' see the prefatory note to 'Resignation' (p.63).

<sup>1</sup> *Letters* II.15.

On January 5, 1850, Arnold copied the first stanza into Dora Wordsworth's autograph-album. A facsimile of this may be found in F. V. Morley's *Dora Wordsworth Her Book*, London, 1924, opposite p.166.

The influence of Shelley on Arnold's early poems has not often been noticed by critics. Of this poem Swinburne in his essay, 'Wordsworth and Byron,' says: 'The echo of Shelley's voice in its fainter but not least exquisite modulations has been caught with incomparable skill and precision in an early lyric,—"Joy comes and goes."'

In the same context he said of Arnold, 'He is, with the single exception of Mr. Aubrey de Vere, the only man who has ever written a poem so exactly after the manner of Shelley that both in style and in spirit it is not unworthy of the honour to be mistaken for a genuine lyric of the second order among the minor poems of our greatest lyric poet.'<sup>1</sup>

It must be remembered that Arnold's essay on Shelley, largely a review of Dowden's life, and the disparaging remarks made in 'The Study of Poetry' against Shelley's vagueness, give us only a part of his judgement on the subject. A second essay on Shelley—presumably a criticism of the poetry—was among the assigned tasks recorded in Arnold's note-book for 1888. Arnold died, however, before starting to write it. Such an essay would have considerably enlarged our knowledge of what the later poet really thought about Shelley and perhaps of what use he had found him.

<sup>1</sup> *Miscellanies*, London, 1886, p.112.

## IN UTRUMQUE PARATUS

In 1869 this poem, which had first appeared in the volume of 1849 and had not since been reprinted,<sup>1</sup> was provided with a new ending. Instead of the last stanza, we read,

Thy native world stirs at thy feet unknown,  
Yet there thy secret lies!  
Out of this stuff, these forces, thou art grown,  
And proud self-severance from them were disease.  
O scan thy native world with pious eyes!  
High as thy life be risen, 'tis from these;  
And these, too, rise.

This stanza, which seems to have been influenced by the new theory of evolution, was probably thought by the poet to be more consistent with the conclusion of the poem, the second half of which presents the hypothesis that man is the product of the world of matter and has no spiritual origin in or relation to 'One all-pure' Mind; whereas in the earlier version the implication that life is but a dream—a fact of which the dreamer may remind himself—seems in some degree a return to the idealism of the first half. The stanza of 1869 introduces the conception of a world of matter 'rising' gradually into the conscious life of Man; this may have seemed to the poet too startling an innovation to retain. At any rate in the next edition (1877) he returned to the earlier ending, and never reprinted the stanza here quoted.

1 Swinburne wrote: 'For its recovery I believe that I may take some credit to myself, and claim in consequence some thanks from all serious students of contemporary poetry.' *Essays and Studies*, London, 1875, p. 127, n. 1.

## THE WORLD AND THE QUIETIST

This poem, from the volume of 1849, was reprinted in 1855, and then discarded till 1877.

'Critias' is very probably a name for Arthur Hugh Clough, though it is of course possible that it serves merely as a type, with no personal allusion. Arnold may well be referring to the argumentative Critias of the spurious Platonic dialogue, the *Eryxias*, of whom Socrates says, 'Yet I dare be sworn that Critias will not be moved a whit by the argument.' In any case, the name derives from Plato. (Cf. *Charmides* and the fragmentary *Critias*.)

The poem probably recalls Arnold's vain attempts to convince Clough of the merit of Indian literature, and, in particular, of the *Bhagavad Gita*. On March 1, 1848, he wrote, 'I am disappointed the Oriental wisdom, God grant it were mine, pleased you not.' <sup>1</sup> The 'wise passiveness' of the East is again referred to in a following letter.<sup>2</sup>

The incident described in the last stanza may refer to nothing more recondite than the familiar anecdote in Herodotus:

Therewithal he [Darius] charged one of his servants to say to him thrice whenever dinner was set before him, 'Master, remember the Athenians.' <sup>3</sup>

It is true that the words of the slave are hardly to be taken as those of a quietist, nor is the message in any way a reminder of the more solemn issues of life; nevertheless the words recall to the Great King's mind a duty which

<sup>1</sup> *Letters to Clough*, p. 69.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 71.

<sup>3</sup> (v. 105). Translation of A. D. Godley.

remains to be performed, and a mood that is in complete opposition to that of the revellers about him. It is an 'adverse voice' that falls upon his ear.

It would seem more consistent if the words of the slave were '*Memento mori*,' or some equivalent admonition, like the words of that pale shape in 'Mycerinus' which

Gliding half hidden through the dusky stems,  
Would thrust a hand before the lifted bowl,  
Whispering: *A little space, and thou art mine!*

### HORATIAN ECHO

This lyric 'To an Ambitious Friend' was added to the collected edition of Arnold's poems in one volume, published posthumously, in 1890. The note appended to it reads, 'Written in 1847. Printed by permission of Mr. Arthur Galton, to whom the Poem was given in 1886 for publication in *The Hobby Horse*.' This was the *Century Guild Hobby Horse*<sup>1</sup> for July, 1887 (not 1886), in which it is the leading contribution. Its appearance had been preceded by some correspondence with Arthur Howard Galton (1852-1921), one of the promoters of the periodical.

On April 21, 1887, Arnold wrote to Galton, 'If I can make anything of a little Horatian Echo, in verse, which has lain by me for years, discarded because of an unsatisfactory stanza, you shall have it.'<sup>2</sup> Later<sup>3</sup> Mr. Galton calls it an 'unfinished poem'—why we do not know. On June 4, the poet wrote again, 'I send you the thing I promised—a relic of youth. It is quite artificial in sentiment, but has

<sup>1</sup> Edited by Herbert Percy Horne and A. H. Mackmurdo.

<sup>2</sup> Galton, *Two Essays upon Matthew Arnold*, London, 1897, p. 110.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 97.

some tolerable lines, perhaps. . . . Let me see a proof of the lines.' <sup>4</sup> Some negligible correspondence ensued regarding the question, asked by the editor, whether the title should be singular or plural. <sup>5</sup>

Actually there is more than one Horatian echo in the poem. Arnold's scorn of 'the shouldering herd' (*Odi profanum vulgus et arceo*) and the noisy world of commerce and ambition recalls several of the *Odes* (II.xvi; III.i; III.xvi) and the *Epistles* (I.vi; II.ii). The opening stanzas of the English poem almost take their text from Horace's invitation to Maecenas to flee the turmoil and politics of the city:

*omitte mirari beatae  
fumum et opes strepitumque Romae. . . .*

*tu civitatem quis deceat status  
curas et urbi sollicitus times,  
quid Seres et regnata Cyro  
Bactra parent Tanaisque discors.*

Horace goes on to urge contentment with simple pleasures, as Arnold does in his warning:

Of little threads our life is spun,  
And he spins ill, who misses one.

The quick flight of beauty before the advance of age—Arnold's closing theme—is a familiar one in the *Odes* (I.xxv; II.xi; IV.x; IV.xiii).

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., p.112.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., p.113

The first stanza of the poem also recalls Milton's lines to Cyriack Skinner:

Let Euclid rest and Archimedes pause,  
And what the Swede intend, and what the French.

The manuscript, retained by the editor, is now among the Yale Papers. Dated 1847 and signed Matthew Arnold, it is written on a single page, apparently torn from a book, and the poem fills both sides of the sheet. It is not easy to identify the 'unsatisfactory stanza,' for important changes were made in the second, fifth, and sixth stanzas, as a reference to the variant readings will make clear. But a stanza similar to the second—obviously a mere draft—is found pencilled on the inside cover at the back of Arnold's copy of Eckermann, *Gespräche mit Goethe*, VOL.II., Leipzig, 1837:

Him not the noisy swarming race  
Of the invading populace  
Mounting to power long denied—  
Who will not mount in peace—but love  
At such despotic length to prove  
That right is on their side

This book is in the possession of Professor Whitridge.

The friend addressed may well have been Clough. 'Eugenia'—also mentioned in 'Philomela'—is probably a lay figure, like the lady addressed in the last paragraph of 'Dover Beach.' At any rate, the events of Arnold's youth, so far as we know them, throw no light on these fair women. It seems probable that this poem was originally intended to



illustrate the 'refusal of limitation by the sentiment of love,' as set forth in the list of poems to be composed in 1849. See above, pp. 11, 13-14.

See the *Letters to Clough* (p. 93), for some lines which Arnold had originally written in the back of his copy of Burnet's *Life of Matthew Hale*. The thought is close to that of the last part of the 'Horatian Echo':

Say this of her:

The day was, thou wert not: the day will be,  
Thou wilt be most unlovely: shall I chuse  
Thy little moment life of loveliness  
Betwixt blank nothing and abhorred decay  
To glue my fruitless gaze on, and to pine,  
Sooner than those twin reaches of great time,  
When thou art either nought, and so not loved,  
Or somewhat, but that most unloveable,  
That preface and post-scribe thee?—

#### THE SECOND BEST

The first draft of this poem is found in the Yale MS.

Moderate tasks & moderate leisure  
Quiet living strict kept measure  
Both in suffring and in pleasure—  
'Tis for this thy nature yearns

But so many books thou readeſt  
such anxious  
But so many schemes thou breedeſt  
such furious  
But so many paſſions feeceſt—  
That thy poor head almoſt turns.

And (the world's so madly jangled,  
Human things so deep entangled  
Nature's wish must now be strangled  
For that *best* which she discerns

So it must be—yet, while leading  
A strain'd life, while over-feeding  
Like the rest, his wit with reading  
No small profit that man earns

Who from history's vague narrations,  
From pretentious teas'd relations  
Of man's mental operations  
Turning sick & baffled learns

That the one lore that's assuring  
Is "Persistance all-enduring—"  
That man's spirit at its luring  
Deeply stirs & truly burns.

The poem was first printed in *Empedocles on Etna, and Other Poems*, 1852; it was revived in 1867 for the volume entitled *New Poems*. In 1869 it was placed with the lyric poems, where with 'The Progress of Poesy,' 'Pis-Aller,' and one or two others it forms a group of poems of disillusion. In 1877 it was given its present position among the Early Poems, where it remained thereafter.

There seems to be a note here of that 'Alexandrian pessimism' which Arnold had at one time intended to make the subject of a poem. See above, p. 14.

#### CONSOLATION

An explanatory note, appended to this poem at its first appearance (1852), reads, 'Written during the siege of

Rome by the French.' Later (1877) the date, '1849,' was added. Practically no change of importance was made in the text of the poem, but in 1853 and 1854 it was prefaced by the following passage as a preliminary quotation or motto:

The wide earth is still  
Wider than one man's passion: there's no mood,  
No meditation, no delight, no sorrow,  
Cas'd in one man's dimensions, can distil  
Such pregnant and infectious quality,  
Six yards round shall not ring it.—

But in 1857 these lines, doubtless of Arnold's own composition, were discarded and never used again, though the poem itself was reprinted with every new edition of the collected verse. Arnold may have felt that the poetic value of the quotation was greater—or less—than that of the poem, which suffered by comparison. It is difficult to detect any relation between the lines quoted and the sentiments expressed in the poem, which seem commonplace compared with the images that illustrate them.

The Oriental references plainly reflect the poet's reading. He had come upon the description of the gilt terraces of holy Lassa in R.-E. Huc's *Souvenirs d'un voyage dans la Tartarie et le Thibet pendant les années 1844, 1845, et 1846*, Paris, 1850. The book was at once translated into English. Matthew Arnold's copy of the book was of the edition of 1850. Huc's book was elaborately reviewed in the *Revue des Deux Mondes*<sup>1</sup> by Eugène Veuillot, '*Le Thibet et les missions françaises dans la Haute-Asie*.' This review may in-

<sup>1</sup> *Revue des Deux Mondes*, tome vi, nouvelle période, June 15, 1850, pp 991-1032.

deed be the immediate source of Arnold's third stanza, for a single page of the article (1015) contains all the Eastern details employed in the poem.

Materials for the account of the African beggar (stanzas 6-8) are found in the review of James Richardson's *Travels in the Great Desert of Sahara* by Paul Merruau.<sup>2</sup> In this article the poet came upon a vivid description of the 'sand-hemmed cities' of Ghadames and Ghat, as well as an account of the outrageous system of beggary in them and an explanation of the relation of mendicancy to the activities of the bandits of the Sahara.

Arnold's assertion that 'Consolation' was composed in 1849—the date was added nearly thirty years after its composition—need not vitiate these conclusions, since the poem, though begun in 1849, would naturally be expanded and revised before its publication in 1852.

### RESIGNATION

This was the concluding poem in Arnold's first volume of verse (1849). It was not reprinted till 1855, when, with four other early pieces, which had not been revived in the interval, it was used to increase the bulk of *Poems*, Second Series. From 1860 on, it appeared regularly, first among the Lyrics, and later among the Early Poems.

The note explaining that the journey described the passage over Wythburn Fells was added by Arnold in the volume of 1869.<sup>1</sup> On August 7, 1849, Thomas Arnold wrote to his mother: 'Does Fausta mean K., and is the walk "ten

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., tome x, nouvelle période, May 15, 1851, pp 745-67.

<sup>1</sup> VOL.II, Note 10, p.265.

years ago" alluded to in "Resignation" that which we took over Wythburn Fells to Keswick with Captain Hamilton? Or was no particular walk intended?"<sup>2</sup> A memorial stone, standing today at the point where the party left the road at the inn at Wythburn, indicates that the date of the first walk was 1833 (the year of the building of Fox How); the date of the second, 1843.<sup>3</sup> Arnold's note in 1869 speaks of the 'sedentary landlord of thirty years ago.' Fausta was Jane, Matthew's elder sister and Dr. Arnold's eldest child, who married William Edward Forster of Rawdon (near Bradford) in the summer of 1850.<sup>4</sup> She is the 'K' of Arnold's correspondence. Mrs. Humphry Ward remarks, 'It was to her that "Resignation" was addressed, in recollection of their mountain walks and talks together.'<sup>5</sup>

'Resignation' is one of a very few poems dealing directly with the environment and associations of the poet's youth in the Lake District.<sup>6</sup> The crossing of the pass here described is contrasted with the similar 'walk' ten years before, at which time the poet was, presumably, in his eleventh year. He quotes a line from 'Resignation'—'Not deep the poet sees, but wide'—in a letter to Clough, written in the early part of February, 1849;<sup>7</sup> but the work could have been forming since 1843. It is the kind of poem which somehow suggests repeated revision over a considerable length of time.

2 Unpublished letter in the possession of Miss Dorothy Ward.

3 The stone, giving the dates of Arnold's birth and death and quoting lines 40-41, 64-67 of the poem, commemorates 'the two walks from hence over the Armboth Fells July 1833-43.'

4 T. Wemyss Reid, *Life of W. E. Forster*, London, 1888. I.267.

5 *A Writer's Recollections*, p.39.

6 Cf. 'The Youth of Nature.'

7 *Letters to Clough*, p.99.

The reference in line 85 to the 'sea' in which the two travellers had once bathed their hands, on reaching the end of their journey, is not easily understood, unless the last part of the trip was made in a conveyance. If Derwentwater be meant the word 'sea' seems hardly appropriate.

'Resignation' has been a favourite with all the admirers of Arnold's poetry, and critics have sought an explanation of its philosophical reflections in sources as remote as Lucretius, Senancour, and the *Bhagavad Gita*. Arnold's letters to Clough, written in March, 1848, make it abundantly evident that he was profoundly impressed by the Indian poem. He contrasts 'meditation or absorption' with knowledge. It is tempting to see in the process of stoical resignation described in the poem a preliminary to that absorption in the 'general life' which Arnold had found in his Oriental source.

Perhaps the earlier and chief influence on the poem is Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister*, which Arnold doubtless knew in Thomas Carlyle's famous translation. Chapter two of the second book contains a discourse between Werner and Wilhelm, the disappointed romantic, on the themes of 'Resignation'—man's unrest and ambition, and the rôle of the poet:

Look at men, how they struggle after happiness and satisfaction! Their wishes, their toil, their gold are ever hunting restlessly; and after what? After that which the poet has received from nature; the right enjoyment of the world; the feeling of himself in others; the harmonious conjunction of many things that will seldom exist together.

What is it that keeps men in continual discontent and agitation? It is, that they cannot make realities correspond with their conceptions, that enjoyment steals away from among their hands, that the

wished-for comes too late, and nothing reached and acquired produces on the heart the effect, which their longing for it at a distance led them to anticipate. Now, fate has exalted the poet above all this, as if he were a god. He views the conflicting tumult of the passions; sees families and kingdoms raging in aimless commotion; sees those inexplicable enigmas of misunderstanding, which frequently a single monosyllable would suffice to explain, occasioning convulsions unutterably baleful. He has a fellow-feeling of the mournful and the joyful in the fate of all human beings. When the man of the world is devoting his days to wasting melancholy, for some deep disappointment; or in the ebullience of joy, is going out to meet his happy destiny, the lightly-moved and all-conceiving spirit of the poet, steps forth, like the sun from night to day, and with soft transitions tunes his harp to joy or woe. From his heart, its native soil, springs up the lovely flower of wisdom; and if others, while waking dream, and are pained with fantastic delusions from their every sense, he passes the dream of life like one awake, and the strangest of incidents is to him a part both of the past and of the future. And thus the poet is at once a teacher, a prophet, a friend of gods and men. How! thou wouldst have him to descend from his height to some paltry occupation? He who is fashioned like the bird to hover round the world, to nestle on the lofty summits, to feed on buds and fruits, exchanging gaily one bough for another, *he* ought also to work at the plough like an ox; like a dog to train himself to the harness and draught; or perhaps, tied up in a chain, to guard a farm-yard by his barking? . . .

Sufficiently provided for within, they [poets] had need of little from without; the gift of communicating lofty emotions and glorious images to men, in melodies and words that charmed the ear, and fixed themselves inseparably on whatever objects they referred to, of old enraptured the world, and served the gifted as a rich inheritance. . . . They found a home in every habitation of the world, and the lowliness of their condition but exalted them the more.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>8</sup> Goethe, *Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship* [Carlyle's translation], 3 vols., Edinburgh and London, 1824, I. 126-7, 128. We were first reminded of this passage by Mr. Andrew S. Cairncross, and later by M. Louis Bonnerot.

The reflections on the life of the poet in 'Resignation' suggest, by contrast, those in 'The Strayed Reveller.' Mr. Lionel Trilling has pointed out that, if the Poet of the former piece identifies himself with the life of others, as does the Poet of 'The Strayed Reveller,' he does so, 'not to increase his selfhood but rather to lose it,' like the 'man whose spirit is controlled' of the *Bhagavad Gita*. Mr. Trilling well says: "The Strayed Reveller" is Arnold's celebration of the painful glories of man's bondage to the strength of the emotions but "Resignation" is the assertion of the way to human freedom in the abandonment of the romantic temperament and in the search for a kind of *amor intellectualis Dei*, the poet's loving, non-personal vision of the world, or what Arnold calls, with a suggestion of Emerson, a drawing closer to "the general Life."<sup>9</sup>

Despite the easy flow of Arnold's couplets, however, his youthful philosophy is not yet rigorously consistent, and perhaps not wholly clear to himself. The attempt of two young people to work out a *Weltanschauung* for themselves frequently leaves something to be desired, and it is so in the present poem. The death of Arnold's father, the religious unrest, the Oxford Movement, and even Carlyle's notion of the importance of 'reducing one's denominator,' are all, as well as the literary influences just mentioned, to be borne in mind when considering the spirit in which the poem was composed.

But it is more important to remember the beauty of the poem than its 'philosophy.' Arnold himself remarks that

<sup>9</sup> Lionel Trilling, *Matthew Arnold*, New York, 1939, pp.99,100. Mr. Trilling suggests that the 'Fausta' whom Arnold instructs is a 'female Faust,' the type of romantic who craves action, adventure, and poignant experience to relieve the ennui of life.



the poet's most precious endowment is his vision—to see widely, to see steadily, 'before him to see life unroll.' The young poet's power in the description of natural scenery, which was to come to perfection in the 'Oxford poems,' is here fully manifest; indeed, we have here, in solution, the elements which were to issue as 'The Scholar-Gipsy,'—the gipsies themselves, as well as the youthful, questing poet, watchful but aloof:

From some high station he looks down,  
At sunset, on a populous town.

In the passage that follows there may be found lines which might, but for metrical differences, be transferred to the later poem.

He leans upon a gate and sees  
The pasture and the quiet trees.  
Low, woody hill, with gracious bound,  
Folds the still valley almost round;  
The cuckoo, loud on some high lawn,  
Is answer'd from the depth of dawn;  
In the hedge straggling to the stream,  
Pale, dew-drench'd, half-shut roses gleam;  
But, where the farther side slopes down  
He sees the drowsy new-waked clown  
In his white quaint-embroider'd frock  
Make, whistling, tow'rd his mist-wreath'd flock—  
Slowly, behind his heavy tread,  
The wet, flower'd grass heaves up its head.

Here is the pensive watchfulness of the gipsy-scholar,<sup>10</sup> who attains at last to a participation in that 'general life'

10 Carleton Stanley (*Matthew Arnold*, Toronto, 1938, p. 51) notices the connexion between these lines in 'Resignation' and the later poem. Mr. Stanley is the first to observe the Lucretian ring in 'Resignation.'

which does not cease. In this connexion it should be remembered that only one year after the second 'Resignation walk' Arnold discovered 'Glanvil's book,' which may have partly affected this early poem of the Lake region as it directly inspired the later tribute to the Oxford countryside.

Among minor details it may be noticed that Arnold's own youthful study of Alaric leaves its stamp on the opening of the poem, with its picture of the barbarian invader surveying the country round him; and that the metre, of which he is already master, reveals his instinctive fondness for short lines.



## **NARRATIVE POEMS**



## SOHRAB AND RUSTUM

IN Arnold's second list of poems to be composed in 1851 (see above, pp.16-17) stands the title, 'The Death of Sohrab.' We must assume that the poet found it impossible to complete the poem in time for insertion in *Empedocles on Etna, and Other Poems*, published in October, 1852.

By April, 1853, however, the work was well advanced, for on the fourteenth of that month he wrote to his sister, Mrs. Forster:

I am occupied with a thing that gives me more pleasure than anything I have ever done yet, which is a good sign; but whether I shall not ultimately spoil it by being obliged to strike it off in fragments, instead of at one heat, I cannot quite say.<sup>1</sup>

The poem was finished by the first of May, on which day he wrote to Clough in much the same strain.<sup>2</sup> About the same time he wrote to his mother:

All my spare time has been spent on a poem which I have just finished, and which I think by far the best thing I have yet done, and that it will be generally liked, though one never can be sure of this. I have had the greatest pleasure in composing it—a rare thing with me, and, as I think, a good test of the pleasure what you write is likely to afford to others; but then the story is a very noble and excellent one.<sup>3</sup>

Arnold's doctrine of the poet's pleasure in creating a poem and his related power to 'give joy' to the reader is set forth in the essay which prefaced the volume of 1853. He had reflected long on this matter during the autumn

<sup>1</sup> *Letters* I.29.

<sup>2</sup> *Letters to Clough*, p.136.

<sup>3</sup> *Letters* I.30.

and winter of 1852. See his account of himself and his poetic powers in a letter to Clough dated December 14, 1852.<sup>4</sup> The doctrine had already crystallized into a quatrain (of doubtful poetic value), quoted in this same letter:

What poets feel not when they make,  
A pleasure in creating,  
The world in *its* turn, will not take  
Pleasure in contemplating.

It would be unnecessary to quote this fragment here, had not Arnold himself associated it with 'Sohrab and Rustum' in 1869 by using it as a sort of prefatory note to his collected poems. It occupies the left-hand page opposite that on which 'Sohrab' begins.

MANUSCRIPT. Three portions of the manuscript exist:

(1) 105 lines in all, which, with three added in the first edition, constitute the first 108 lines of the poem. This fragment is preserved at Dove Cottage, Grasmere. It was presented to the museum there by Miss Frances Arnold, the poet's sister.

(2) lines 109-469. This fragment is in the possession of Professor Arnold Whitridge, of Yale University, to whom it was presented by Mr. Gordon Wordsworth.

(3) lines 470-526. This fragment is preserved at the Keswick Museum; it was presented by Miss Arnold.

The remainder of the manuscript, 366 lines in all, we have been unable to find.

The manuscript, which has passed through the hands of

<sup>4</sup> *Letters to Clough*, p. 126.

the printers, is written on both sides of folios of blue foolscap, not stitched or fastened together. It abounds in corrections and alterations, which, in the new edition of the Poems, will be listed for the first time. There are no major changes in plot, content, or treatment.

THE FIRST PRINTING. This, the leading poem in the edition of 1853, was made the more conspicuous by the critical essay which prefaced the volume (incorporated in *Irish Essays*, 1882). This, though making no direct reference to 'Sohrab and Rustum,' gives expression to Arnold's theory of poetic composition. It also serves to justify the Homeric style and manner which the poet had adopted. His study of Homer at this time is recorded in the notebooks. The words 'An Episode,' placed under the title, imply that the action here narrated is but a portion of a larger whole, with which the poet has not chosen to deal. That larger subject is of course the exploits of Rustum, the legendary Persian hero. Of that body of myth Arnold knew all too little.

'Sohrab and Rustum' was, naturally, reprinted in every succeeding edition of the poems, save the so-called *New Poems* of 1867 and 1868. Room was found for it in the *Selections* of 1878.

In the first edition the poet makes no reference to the source from which he had drawn the material, but in the second edition, published the next year (1854), he quotes the story as given in Sir John Malcolm's *History of Persia*,<sup>5</sup> and, what is much more to the point, mentions for the first time his indebtedness to Sainte-Beuve's *causerie* on

<sup>5</sup> Malcolm is on Arnold's reading list for December, 1852.



Mohl's translation of Ferdousi. Arnold says (p.52), 'Of M. Mohl's book itself I have not been able to obtain sight.' It was a significant admission. Arnold had found his original inspiration (as he had done before in composing 'The Church of Brou' and 'Tristram and Iseult') in a relatively brief French essay. The story, we may infer, was new to him. But an early interest in Persia, extending back into boyhood, seems to be indicated by his possession of a volume received 'honoris causâ,' J. F. Fraser's *Travels and Adventures in the Persian Provinces on the Southern Banks of the Caspian Sea*, London, 1826. This interest must have been revived in 1850 by two delightful articles by Eugène Flandin, in the *Revue des Deux Mondes*, on the ruins of Persepolis.<sup>6</sup> Here Arnold read of Tâkht-i-Djemchid, where the

broken flights of steps

Lie prone, enormous, down the mountain side,

a description that is continued for several pages (123-6).

To Malcolm's *History of Persia*, mentioned by Flandin (p.128), Arnold must now have had recourse, if he were not already familiar with it. In this standard work he discovered of course much matter useful to his purpose. Having decided upon the proper manipulation of the story, he immersed it, as he wrote, in the Homeric atmosphere, 'Orientalising' by the introduction of local colour drawn in large part from the *Travels into Bokhara* by Sir Alexander Burnes (1834).

<sup>6</sup> 'Voyage archéologique en Perse', [first part,] 'Les Ruines de Persepolis,' *Revue des Deux Mondes*, tome vii, nouvelle période, July 1, 1850, pp.114-41; [second part,] 'Les Palais et les sépultures de Persépolis,' August 1, 1850, pp.413-33.

SOURCES. There are thus four main tributaries to 'Sohrab': Sainte-Beuve's review of Jules Mohl's translation of Ferdousi; Malcolm's *History of Persia*; Homer; and the *Travels* just mentioned.<sup>7</sup> Each of these, save the fourth, has been exhaustively studied by earlier critics.<sup>8</sup>

### CAPTAIN ALEXANDER BURNES'S *Travels into Bokhara*

On November 26, 1853, Arnold wrote to J. F. B. Blackett regarding the similes in 'Sohrab and Rustum': 'What you say about the similes looks very just upon paper. I can only say that I took a great deal of trouble to orientalise them (the Bahrein diver was originally an ordinary fisher), because I thought they looked strange, and jarred, if Western.'<sup>9</sup>

In the manuscript the passage about the diver had read at first,

<sup>7</sup> His acquaintance with Wood's *Journey to the Sources of the Oxus* was made, as his note-books reveal, at a later period.

<sup>8</sup> The many borrowings from Homer—and Virgil—are noted by various editors of the poem. For example, see the edition of W. J. Cunningham Pike, M.A., Oxford, 1916.

The most detailed study of Arnold's debt to Malcolm's *History of Persia* is that by Professor Louise Pound in *Modern Language Notes*, VOL. XXI., January, 1906, pp. 15–17. Miss Pound shows that Arnold used Malcolm rather than the abridgement of the Shāhnāma of Ferdousi by the Rev. J. A. Atkinson (1832). Miss Pound points out: (1) Arnold follows Malcolm's spelling of Persian names, (2) Malcolm has a 'seal' on Sohrab's arm, whereas Atkinson has a golden bracelet; (3) Arnold follows Malcolm in omitting all mention of the name of Sohrab's mother, Tamineh, who is very prominent in the Shāhnāma; (4) 'the Oxus region stands out clearly in Malcolm's chapters as the frontier region defended by Rustum against the invading Tartars,' whereas in Atkinson's version 'Sohrab is represented as in a fortress, Rustum as arriving before it'—the scene greatly different and the river called the Jihún throughout; Arnold refers to details in Malcolm such as Rustum's falcon, the Bahrein diver, Jemshid's pillars of black granite at Persepolis. Miss Pound holds that Arnold used the first ten chapters of VOL. I, the Appendix to that volume, and chapters 22–3 in VOL. II.

<sup>9</sup> *Letters* I.32.

And dear as the wet fisher to the eyes  
 Of his pale wife who waits and weeps ashore,  
 At twilight, on a stormy eve in March,  
 Running fast homeward with the turn of tide  
 Beaches the pinnacle in a darkening cave  
 Rejoins her in their hut upon the sands.

The lines written to 'orientalise' it replaced the third, fourth, and fifth above:

By sandy Bahrein, in the Persian Gulf,  
 Plunging all day in the blue waves, at night,  
 Having made up his tale of precious pearls.

His dependence upon Captain Burnes's book may be illustrated by the following examples: (1) Rustum's club is said to be of the size of trees fished out of the flooded Hyphasis or Hydaspes River (lines 41off.). This reposes upon the following passage in Burnes: At Pind Dadun Khan, on the bank of the Hydaspes, the houses are said to be made of cedar,

which is floated down with the inundations of the river from the Hemilaya. . . . We saw a cedar-tree lying on the banks of the Hydaspes, with a circumference of thirteen feet. On this river the Macedonians constructed the fleet by which they navigated the Indus; and it is a remarkable fact, that in none of the other Punjab rivers are such trees floated down, nor do there exist any where else such facilities for the construction of vessels. (VOL.I.p.50.)

(2) Travellers crossing underneath the Indian Caucasus hold their breath for fear, and slake their parched throats with sugared mulberries; they pass multitudes of dead birds, choked by the air (lines 16off., another later insertion in the MS.). The corresponding passage in Burnes is:

This great peak [Hindoo Koosh] is visible from Cabool, and entirely enveloped in milk-white snow. I saw it also from Koondooz, on the north, at a distance of 150 miles. Its altitude must be considerable, for the travellers complain of the difficulty of breathing, and carry sugar and mulberries with them, to ease their respiration; and the strongest of men suffer from giddiness and vomiting. Thousands of birds are also found dead on the snow, for it is believed that they are unable to fly from the violence of the winds; but it is more probable that they are prevented by the rarity of the atmosphere: yet birds are used to higher elevations than men and quadrupeds. They often attempt to walk across; and numbers of them are ensnared. Beasts of burden suffer as much as man, and many sink and perish. The greatest silence is preserved in crossing Hindoo Koosh; and no one speaks loud, or fires a gun, lest the reverberation cause a fall of snow: such, at least, is the reason assigned; nor does it appear to be destitute of foundation. (VOL.II, pp.247-8.)

(3) The 'mound' to be heaped above Sohrab's bones, with its 'far-seen pillar over all' (lines 788-91), seems to have been suggested, not only by classical burial mounds but by the '*yoozka*' near which Burnes and a Toorkmun halted, which was a mound of earth with a pole stuck in the centre. The Toorkmun said: "It . . . marks the place where some one has died or been laid out as a corpse. The Toorkmuns say a blessing as they pass the spot, and hope for the favour of the deceased. It is an old custom among us, and you will see many others as you advance." They are not graves, but mounds or barrows raised in honour of the dead.' (VOL.II.pp.113-14.)

Most of the specifically Oriental details are also found in Burnes: as the black Tartar tents (II.101); Peran-Wisa's rugs and felts (II.60); the fleece of Kara-Kul (II.174); the fermented milk of mares (a mis-reading of II.19); the

scanty beards of the Tartars (II.61,265); and many of the proper names.

But by far the most important of such sources is the account of the Oxus River:

The Oxus rises in the table-lands of Pamere, and is formed by a variety of rivulets which collect in that elevated region of Asia. . . . It winds among mountains, and, approaching within twenty miles of the town of Khoolloom, and much nearer than appears in our maps, passes about half a degree to the north of Balkh. There are no hills between it and that ancient city, as have been represented. It here enters upon the desert by a course nearly N.W., fertilizes a limited tract of about a mile on either side, till it reaches the territories of Orgunje or Khiva, the ancient Kharasm, where it is more widely spread by art, and is then lost in the sea of Aral. In the latter part of its course, so great is the body of water drawn for the purposes of irrigation, and so numerous are the divisions of its branches, that it forms a swampy delta, overgrown with reeds and aquatic plants. . . .

The Oxus is a navigable river throughout the greater portion of its course. Its channel is remarkably straight, and free from rocks, rapids, and whirlpools; nor is it much obstructed by sand-banks: were it not for the marshes which choke its embouchure, it might be ascended from the sea of Aral to near Koondooz, a distance of 600 miles. If we deduct the extent of that delta, commencing some way below Orgunje, which does not exceed fifty miles, we have still an inland line of navigation of 550 miles. (VOL.II.pp.186,187,189-90.)

Out of this straightforward, topographical prose came the noble description of the River Oxus with which Arnold brought 'Sohrab and Rustum' to a close. The poet's love of rivers cannot escape the hastiest reader. His letters abound in references to the beauty of running water: he has a 'perfect passion' for 'divine' rivers and clear streams,

and the dry water-courses in the Apennines end 'by becoming a positive pain' to him. He was reconciled to his inability to visit Greece by the realization that he could go there only in summer, when the rivers would be at their lowest. When writing to Clough from the Baths of Leuk in September, 1848, he declared that he looked upon water 'as the Mediator between the inanimate and man.' A favourite passage in the *Iliad* which he twice translated—once into prose and once into verse<sup>10</sup>—is that descriptive of the rival armies encamped by the Xanthus, a scene which must have been often in his mind as he laboured at 'Sohrab and Rustum.'

This love of rivers exalts the description of the Oxus to a romantic beauty which springs in part out of its symbolic character. A contrast is set up between the fever of man's life and the calm majesty of streams and stars, 'their glorious tasks in silence perfecting.' The Oxus, rising in the high mountains in Pamere, flowing with its bright speed and its clear direction until choked and hemmed in mid course, 'a foil'd, circuitous wanderer'; then moving at the close to its luminous home in the starlit sea—all this is an emblem of the various stages of human destiny. There is something here, as in other river-poems, of Wordsworth's lines, themselves partly borrowed from Moschus:

Still glides the Stream, and shall for ever glide;  
The Form remains, the Function never dies;  
While *we*, the brave, the mighty, and the wise,  
We Men, who in our morn of youth defied  
The elements, must vanish.

10 *On Translating Homer*, 1861, pp.20,93.

It is perhaps not too much to say that the Oxus serves the same purpose as that of the chorus in a Greek drama, with its continual reminder of another order than that temporal and transitory one in which the immediate action moves.

ARNOLD'S ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS. The poet's attitude to his 'sources' is not altogether easy to understand. It is clear that, from the beginning, he would have preferred to make no admissions respecting his acquaintance with the materials which he had collected. Had he followed his own impulse, he would have left the whole subject in abeyance, as in the case of 'The Forsaken Merman' and 'The Neckan.' What, he may well have reasoned, has a true poet to do with acknowledgements or a true critic with source-hunting? The only important question is how the poem *as it stands* affects the reader.

But Arnold's friends kept insisting that his poems, as they stood, were obscure, and advised explanatory notes. Notes were therefore supplied, though the quotations of which they consisted were never copied with scrupulous accuracy, since the poet could not resist the temptation to reduce and to compress.

When John Duke Coleridge, a friend of the poet, reviewed 'Sohrab,' in the *Christian Remembrancer*,<sup>11</sup> he referred with some asperity to Arnold's dependence upon Sainte-Beuve. The poet's susceptibilities were touched, as was natural enough. Even his bland rejoinder,<sup>12</sup> for all its

<sup>11</sup> VOL XXVII, April, 1854, pp 310-33.

<sup>12</sup> The full note on 'Sohrab,' containing this explanation, appeared only in the Second Edition of the Poems, 1854. It is reprinted, however, in the Oxford Standard Authors edition, pp 446-50. A. P. Stanley, writing to Coleridge on

dispassionate common sense, gives evidence of an annoyance that had not wholly passed away. If he had been indifferent to the charge, as, we think, he had a right to be, he would not have replied. *Qui s'excuse s'accuse*. That he himself came to feel thus is shown by the fact that he never reprinted his defence. It appears in the 'second edition' of 1854, and not again during his life.

What then was the cause of Arnold's mortification? He certainly had no wish to be thought the originator of the

October 6, 1854, rebuked him for having charged Arnold with plagiarising from the account of Firdousi. 'I think that you have exposed yourself to a just attack by the manner in which you have made use of information, which, as I understand, you derived solely from him, in bringing against him a charge, as if from your own discovery, of plagiarising without acknowledgment from the two French writers on Firdousi. To me it seems that the nature of the book, the obvious fact that the story was based on a recorded narrative, the freeness with which he told you where to find the original, entirely acquit him. You might as well complain of Shakespeare's versification of Plutarch, and much more (I believe) of Tennyson's versification of the *Morte d'Arthur*. But even if the charge were well grounded, to ground it on what you would not have known but for him seems, to me, an eminent case of "Seething a kid in the mother's milk." ' (Quoted by Ernest Hartley Coleridge in *Life & Correspondence of John Duke Lord Coleridge*, London, 1904, I.212) Hartley Coleridge believed that John Duke Coleridge had himself made the discovery of Arnold's sources, without Arnold's assistance. Arnold was quick to forgive his friend and to forget the wrong. His own letter of November 22, 1853, to John Duke Coleridge is reprinted by Hartley (pp 210-11).

'I have not time to defend "Sohrab and Rustum," but Homer sows his similes very thick at times: look at the 2nd book of the *Iliad*, line 455, and on from there. Virgil does not, but his manner is different altogether.

'I think it is certainly true about the Miltonic air of parts of it; but Milton is a sufficiently great master to imitate. The cranes are not taken direct from him as far as I can remember, but the passage is, no doubt, an imitation of his manner. So with many others. Tennyson is another thing; but one has him so in one's head, one cannot help imitating him sometimes: but except in the last two lines I thought I had kept him out of "Sohrab and Rustum." Mark any other places you notice, for I should wish to alter such.

'*Frore* is (I believe) *frozen*—the German participle *gefrorenes*. . . . I think you will end by liking "Sohrab and Rustum" best, not from any merit of mine in it, but from the incomparable beauty and nobleness of the story. I wish you would get your father to look at it in some spare half-hour.'

Coleridge, in his review (p.322), also noted a resemblance between the closing scenes of *Sohrab* and the treatment of Herodotus' story of Atys and Adrastus in Frederick William Faber's poem, 'The Dream of King Cræsus.'



story of Rustum or of Balder, of Tristram or of Margaret of Austria. He was more than willing for readers to know that he was dealing with myths and legends as old as the races from which they came. He had, in truth, written a preface, not so much to defend the practice, as to praise it and proclaim it to be the noblest that a poet could adopt.

He had, however, a genuine cause for a certain dissatisfaction in the slightness of his acquaintance with the myths out of which sprang the 'episodes' which had inspired him. He was no doubt himself surprised by the suddenness with which his creative power was awakened and by the slightness of the materials out of which it had been kindled. He saw the design for his structure before the materials for it were assembled. No doubt his instinct told him that this awakening of his creative powers was the all-important matter beside which everything else sank into insignificance. Further acquaintance with the myth might very well have been of no assistance whatever in the 'making' of his poem, which, in its larger outlines, was already in his mind. To spend time in widening his knowledge of the repeated Aryan myths of the combat of father and (unknown) son,<sup>13</sup> or in getting up local colour might very well have destroyed the impulse to write.

It is surely significant that, despite the theory which he so subtly propounded in his famous preface, none of his longer poems (save the 'Empedocles' which he repudiated, and the 'Merope' which was a failure,) is derived from a field or a source of which he had any deep or first-hand knowledge. In 'Lucretius,' a subject for which he was

<sup>13</sup> For synopses of other handlings of the story see Egerton Smith's edition of *Sohrab and Rustum*, London, 1913.

fully prepared not only by his formal education but later by specific study, he could never advance. He felt the attraction of Norse mythology, but, in order to read the *Eddas*, must have recourse to an eighteenth-century translation. He felt the inspiration of Arthurian legends, but had neither time nor patience to read them in Old French or even in Malory. He felt the grandeur of the great Persian myth, but could not bring himself to the weary task of going through Malcolm's *Persia* or of reading Ferdousi's poems in translation. He feared to lose the impulse which he had received. And so in the letter quoted above, he confessed to his sister while the poem was under his hand, that he feared to 'spoil it by being obliged to strike it off in fragments, instead of at one heat.' The difficulty which he always encountered in his attempts to write poetry—the paucity of his output compared with the splendour of what he had in mind—drove him to compose while the power was upon him. The result, at least in 'Sohrab and Rustum,' satisfied him, whatever may have been his misgivings over his ignorance of Persian history and literature.

#### THE SICK KING IN BOKHARA

'The Sick King in Bokhara,' published in 1849 and reprinted in 1855, was given a permanent place among the Narrative Poems in 1869. It was placed immediately after 'Sohrab and Rustum,' presumably because of its Oriental theme.

The 'local colour' of the poem is praised by Professor A. V. Williams Jackson in an article entitled 'Bokhara the

Noble.’<sup>1</sup> But the Oriental references are all derived from one work, Captain Sir Alexander Burnes’s *Travels into Bokhara*, discussed in the commentary on ‘Sohrab and Rustum.’ This indebtedness was first pointed out by Farel L. Jouard.<sup>2</sup> His attention had been directed to the book by the poet’s sister, Frances, who, however, was inclined to doubt her brother’s use of it as a source. She should, however, have been in no doubt, for the poet himself had cited Burnes as authority for the assertion in ‘Sohrab and Rustum’ about the use of ‘sugared mulberries’ by travellers crossing Hindoo Koosh. In a letter to Miss Arnold, dated February 19, 1876, he had written:

Colonel Yule is a member of the Indian Council, the Editor of *Marco Polo*, and a great authority about the East; he told me he had been talking with some Indians about my ‘sugared mulberries’ in crossing the Hindu Koosh; the common thing to keep in your mouth is a garlic plant. But he had been sure, he said, that I had authority for the mulberries, I was so faithful about Asiatic things; and so I had. Burnes says that the pedlars eat them in crossing the highest passes, but it was curious to find my poetry taken so seriously.<sup>3</sup>

The book is the source of his Oriental colouring, not only here but also in ‘The Strayed Reveller’ and ‘Sohrab and Rustum.’ This indebtedness has recently been elaborated by Miss Jennie E. MacNeill.<sup>4</sup>

The story as told by Arnold represents a union of two incidents narrated by Burnes. The eighth and ninth chapters of Book II of his second volume contain an account

1 Cf. *Outlook*, VOL. LXXIX, February 4, 1905, pp 321-3.

2 Cf. *Journal of English and German Philology*, VOL VI., October, 1906, pp. 92-8.

3 *Letters* II. 126.

4 *The Times Literary Supplement*, April 11, 1936; January 15, 1938.

of the recent history of Bokhara and its King, aged twenty-seven, Nusseir oolah, or Buhadoor Khan, 'controlled in every action by the authority of the Moollahs, or priests.' The sickness of the King and people was probably suggested to the poet's mind by the account of the Balkh fever, contracted on the banks of the Oxus, which prostrated Captain Burnes and many members of his party upon their arrival in Bokhara.<sup>5</sup> In giving an account of the city, Burnes writes:

Bokhara is very indifferently supplied with water, the river is about six miles distant, and the canal is only once opened in fifteen days. In summer the inhabitants are sometimes deprived of good water for months, and when we were in Bokhara the canals had been dry for sixty days; the snow had not melted in the high lands of Samarcand, and the scanty supply of the river had been wasted before reaching Bokhara.<sup>6</sup>

The sweets mentioned by the King were suggested by the same volume,

One may purchase 'rahut i jan,' or the delight of life,—grape jelly or syrup, mixed up with chopped ice. This abundance of ice is one of the greatest luxuries in Bokhara, and it may be had till the cold weather makes it unnecessary. . . . No one ever thinks of drinking water in Bokhara without icing it. . . . It is a refreshing sight to see the huge masses of it, with the thermometer at 90°, coloured, scraped, and piled into heaps like snow.<sup>7</sup>

Other instances of the use of Burnes's volumes are the following: the Registan (I.273); the duty of a 'fortieth web' laid upon cloth-merchants (I.290); the holy book carried before the King (I.292-3); the taking of slaves (I.342-4,

5 *Travels into Bokhara*, vol. I, pp. 258-9.

6 *Ibid.*, I 301-02

7 *Ibid.*, I. 277-8.

II.11-13); and the tombs along the road to Samarcand (I.316ff.).

The two incidents which unite to form Arnold's plot are narrated together by Burnes:

I have already mentioned the rigour of the Mohammedan law, which is enforced in Bokhara. A few additional instances will further illustrate it. About twelve years since, a person who had violated the law proceeded to the palace, and, in the presence of the King, stated his crime, and demanded justice according to the Koran. The singularity of an individual appearing as his own accuser induced the King to direct him to be driven away. The man appeared the following day with the same tale, and was again turned out. He repaired a third time to the palace, repeated his sins, and upbraided the King for his remissness in declining to dispense justice, which, as a believer of Mahommed, he intreated, that it might lead to his punishment in this world instead of the next. The Ulema, or congress of divines, was assembled: death was the punishment; and the man himself, who was a Moollah, was prepared for this decision. He was condemned to be stoned till dead. He turned his face to Mecca, and, drawing his garment over his head, repeated the kuluma, ("There is but one God, and Mahommed is his prophet!") and met his fate. The King was present, and threw the first stone: but he had instructed his officers to permit the deluded man to escape if he made the attempt. When dead the King wept over his corpse, ordered it to be washed and buried, and proceeded in person to the grave, over which he read the funeral service. It is said that he was much affected; and to this day verses commemorate the death of this unfortunate man, whom we must either pronounce a bigot or a madman. An incident similar to the above happened within this very year. A son who had cursed his mother appeared as a suppliant for justice, and his own accuser. The mother solicited his pardon and forgiveness; the son demanded punishment: the Ulema directed his death, and he was executed as a criminal in the streets of Bokhara.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., I.307-08.

Arnold saw in these incidents an illustration of the supremacy of the law over the caprice of royal inclination. The young king, in spite of his sickness, realizes that, though he is himself the embodiment of the law in his kingdom, he has no power over it. He is bound no less strictly than are his subjects, and to a sterner, though invisible rule, which cannot be altered at pleasure:

But hear ye this, ye sons of men!  
They that bear rule, and are obey'd,  
Unto a rule more strong than theirs  
Are in their turn obedient made.

#### BALDER DEAD

This was the leading poem in the volume of 1855 (*Poems*, Second Series), constituting one third part of the volume. It was reprinted in the edition of 1869, and regularly thereafter, save that it was given no place in the *Selections*, though room had been found for 'Sohrab and Rustum.' In 1855 the story was called, like 'Sohrab,' 'An Episode'; but the term was thereafter cancelled, probably because it had already been used for the other poem. Minor alterations were made in diction, chiefly in the edition of 1869, and one simile, eight lines long, descriptive of a traveller who bivouacs in a forest, was discarded:

And as in the dark night a travelling man  
Who bivouacs in a forest 'mid the hills,  
Sees suddenly a spire of flame shoot up  
Out of the black waste forest, far below,  
Which woodcutters have lighted near their lodge  
Against the wolves; and all night long it flares:—  
So flar'd, in the far darkness, Balder's pyre.  
But fainter, as the stars rose high, it burned.

The passage from the *Younger Edda* was first used for purposes of annotation in 1869. It is drawn from Mallet's *Northern Antiquities*, without reference to other sources.<sup>1</sup>

DATE. The poem was begun during the last weeks of 1853, and became Arnold's chief poetical work for 1854. His reading list for 1853 assigns Mallet's *Northern Antiquities* for December. For his annual holiday in September, 1854, at Fox How, where the poem was completed, he lists: 'read in Homer and Mallet's *Northern Antiquities*.' On October 10, 1854, he wrote his sister: 'I have just finished a poem which I think is better than Sohrab and Rustum, though here [at Fox How] I do not think they consider it so.'<sup>2</sup>

SOURCES. The principal source of the poem is Mallet's *Northern Antiquities*. In a letter of December 12, 1855, Arnold wrote to Mrs. Forster, 'Mallet . . . and his version of the Edda is all the poem is based upon.'<sup>3</sup> Arnold's own copy of Mallet is Bishop Percy's translation (edition of 1847); the book includes a rendering of the *Younger Edda* (or prose *Edda*), from which the story of Balder and most of Arnold's details are drawn.<sup>4</sup>

As usual, Arnold read other books that might assist the substance or the style of his composition. Homer remains throughout 1854, as he was in 1853, a constant companion. At Fox How, in September, Arnold also set himself the sixth book of the *Aeneid*, as well as the *Alcestis* and *Hera-*

<sup>1</sup> *Letters* I.48.

<sup>2</sup> Whitridge, *Unpublished Letters*, p.25

<sup>3</sup> *Letters* I.48.

<sup>4</sup> There are also notes and other additional material by I. A. Blackwell, 1859.

*cleidae*. The first gave him the tone and some direct lines in the description of the journey to the dead. For February, 1854, Arnold listed the letters of Gray, the one poet before him who had handled Scandinavian themes with any success.

TREATMENT. If Arnold at the end of his labours thought 'Balder' superior to 'Sohrab,' the world has sustained—with the help of many schoolmasters—the judgement of the family at Fox How. The Scandinavian has never rivalled in popularity the Persian story. But a comparison of 'Balder' with its sources does reveal an ingenious and inventive handling of the story on Arnold's part and increases one's respect for the work as a whole.

Whether one approves the prevailing tone of Arnold's treatment, is, however, another matter. Professor Herford has justly and tersely put the case: 'The first two [Arnold and Robert Buchanan] owed little but their material to Norse myth. Arnold, like his Greek in the *Grande Chartreuse*, is "thinking of his own gods" as he stands "beside the northern strand," and his *Balder Dead*, though a noble poem, is noble in the Homeric, not the Eddic way.' <sup>5</sup> Arnold's Scandinavia is certainly not the Norseland that Carlyle had praised in 1840 in his 'The Hero as Divinity.' The rough, homely, awkward 'Hyper-Brobdingnagian business' of the North is toned down by Arnold—assisted, of course, by Homer and Virgil—into something that at times comes very near to what Carlyle termed 'the light gracefulness of the old Greek Paganism.' Moreover, Arnold rightly eschews the comic element which is so

5 C. H. Herford, *Norse Myth in English Poetry*, London, 1919, p.14.



much a part of Norse myth, lest it mar the 'high seriousness' of his story. The Thor who comes to the funeral of Balder is not allowed to storm at the giantess Hringhorn or kick the dwarf Litur into the fire. He is strong, but sad and circumspect as his boisterous spirit succumbs to the Virgilian mood. Freyja's chariot enters, but is not drawn by cats nor is the horse Sleipnir given eight legs. Arnold does, of course, suggest that 'Consecration of Valour' which Carlyle admired. 'Balder' has a certain Homeric plainness and virility—the Preface of 1853 had, after all, been finished only a few months before; but the conversations and declamations of the Gods (a major contribution by Arnold) better fit the speeches of the *Iliad* and the *Aeneid* than the uncomplaining melancholy of the older Asgard. As Arnold selects from his sources—alters and invents—to stress, above all else, a Virgilian tenderness and a Virgilian pathos, the ash Igdrasil becomes a cypress tree.

The main facts of Arnold's story are given in the prose *Edda*.<sup>6</sup> Part of this section Arnold printed as his note to the poem. To realize what was Arnold's treatment of his original it is necessary to have, first of all, the entire passage in mind. Gangler, in the poem, has remarked on a famous exploit of Thor and wonders if any other such events took place among the Æsir; whereupon Har replies:

I can tell thee of another event which the Æsir deemed of much greater importance. Thou must know, therefore, that Baldur the Good having been tormented with terrible dreams, indicating that his life was in great peril, communicated them to the assembled

<sup>6</sup> Mallet, pp.446-9.

Æsir, who resolved to conjure all things to avert from him the threatened danger. Then Frigga exacted an oath from fire and water, from iron, and all other metals, as well as from stones, earths, diseases, beasts, birds, poisons, and creeping things, that none of them would do any harm to Baldur. When this was done, it became a favourite pastime of the Æsir, at their meetings, to get Baldur to stand up and serve them as a mark, some hurling darts at him, some stones, while others hewed at him with their swords and battle-axes, for do what they would none of them could harm him, and this was regarded by all as a great honour shown to Baldur. But when Loki, the son of Laufey, beheld the scene, he was sorely vexed that Baldur was not hurt. Assuming, therefore, the shape of a woman, he went to Fensalir, the mansion of Frigga. That goddess, when she saw the pretended woman, inquired of her if she knew what the Æsir were doing at their meetings. She replied, that they were throwing darts and stones at Baldur without being able to hurt him.

‘Ay,’ said Frigga, ‘neither metal nor wood can hurt Baldur, for I have exacted an oath from all of them.’

‘What!’ exclaimed the woman, ‘have all things sworn to spare Baldur?’

‘All things,’ replied Frigga, ‘except one little shrub that grows on the eastern side of Valhalla, and is called Mistletoe, and which I thought too young and feeble to crave an oath from.’

As soon as Loki heard this he went away, and, resuming his natural shape, cut off the mistletoe, and repaired to the place where the gods were assembled. There he found Hödur standing apart, without partaking of the sports, on account of his blindness, and going up to him, said, ‘Why dost thou not also throw something at Baldur?’

‘Because I am blind,’ answered Hödur, ‘and see not where Baldur is, and have, moreover, nothing to throw with.’

‘Come then,’ said Loki, ‘do like the rest, and show honour to Baldur by throwing this twig at him, and I will direct thy arm toward the place where he stands.’

Hödur then took the mistletoe, and under the guidance of Loki,

darted it at Baldur, who, pierced through and through, fell down lifeless. Surely never was there witnessed, either among gods or men, a more atrocious deed than this! When Baldur fell the Æsir were struck speechless with horror, and then they looked at each other, and all were of one mind to lay hands on him who had done the deed, but they were obliged to delay their vengeance out of respect for the sacred place (Peace-stead) where they were assembled. They at length gave vent to their grief by loud lamentations, though not one of them could find words to express the poignancy of his feelings. Odin, especially, was more sensible than the others of the loss they had suffered, for he foresaw what a detriment Baldur's death would be to the Æsir. When the gods came to themselves, Frigga asked who among them wished to gain all her love and good will; 'For this,' said she, 'shall he have who will ride to Hel and try to find Baldur, and offer Hela a ransom if she will let him return to Asgard;' whereupon Hermod, surnamed the Nimble, the son of Odin, offered to undertake the journey. Odin's horse Sleipnir was then led forth, on which Hermod mounted and galloped away on his mission.

The Æsir then took the dead body and bore it to the sea-shore, where stood Baldur's ship Hringhorn, which passed for the largest in the world. But when they wanted to launch it in order to make Baldur's funeral pile on it, they were unable to make it stir. In this conjuncture they sent to Jötunheim for a certain giantess named Hyrrokin, who came mounted on a wolf, having twisted serpents for a bridle. As soon as she alighted, Odin ordered four Berserkir to hold her steed fast, who were, however, obliged to throw the animal on the ground ere they could effect their purpose. Hyrrokin then went to the ship, and with a single push set it afloat, but the motion was so violent that fire sparkled from the rollers, and the earth shook all around. Thor, enraged at the sight, grasped his mallet, and but for the interference of the Æsir would have broken the woman's skull. Baldur's body was then borne to the funeral pile on board the ship, and this ceremony had such an effect on Nanna, the daughter of Nep, that her heart broke with grief, and her body was burnt on the same pile with her husband's. Thor then stood up

and hallowed the pile with Mjolnir, and during the ceremony kicked a dwarf named Litur, who was running before his feet, into the fire. There was a vast concourse of various kinds of people at Baldur's obsequies. First came Odin, accompanied by Frigga, the Valkyrjor and his ravens; then Frey in his car drawn by the boar named Gullinbursti or Slidrugtanni; Heimdall rode his horse called Gulltopp, and Freyja drove in her chariot drawn by cats. There were also a great many Frost-giants and giants of the mountains present. Odin laid on the pile the gold ring called Draupnir, which afterwards acquired the property of producing every ninth night eight rings of equal weight. Baldur's horse was led to the pile fully caparisoned, and consumed in the same flames on the body of his master.

Meanwhile, Hermod was proceeding on his mission. For the space of nine days, and as many nights, he rode through deep glens so dark that he could not discern anything until he arrived at the river Gjoll, which he passed over on a bridge covered with glittering gold. Modgudur, the maiden who kept the bridge, asked him his name and lineage, telling him that the day before five bands of dead persons had ridden over the bridge, and did not shake it so much as he alone. 'But,' she added, 'thou hast not death's hue on thee, why then ridest thou here on the way to Hel?'

'I ride to Hel,' answered Hermod, 'to seek Baldur. Hast thou perchance seen him pass this way?'

'Baldur,' she replied, 'hath ridden over Gjöll's bridge, but there below, towards the north, lies the way to the abodes of death.'

Hermod then pursued his journey until he came to the barred gates of Hel. Here he alighted, girthed his saddle tighter, and remounting, clapped both spurs to his horse, who cleared the gate by a tremendous leap without touching it. Hermod then rode on to the palace, where he found his brother Baldur occupying the most distinguished seat in the hall, and passed the night in his company. The next morning he besought Hela (Death) to let Baldur ride home with him, assuring her that nothing but lamentations were to be heard among the gods. Hela answered that it should now be tried whether Baldur was so beloved as he was said to be.

'If therefore,' she added, 'all things in the world, both living and lifeless, weep for him, then shall he return to the Æsir, but if any one thing speak against him or refuse to weep, he shall be kept in Hel.'

Hermod then rose, and Baldur led him out of the hall and gave him the ring Draupnir, to present as a keepsake to Odin. Nanna also sent Frigga a linen cassock and other gifts, and to Fulla a gold finger-ring. Hermod then rode back to Asgard, and gave an account of all he had heard and witnessed.

The gods upon this despatched messengers throughout the world, to beg everything to weep, in order that Baldur might be delivered from Hel. All things very willingly complied with this request, both men and every other living being, as well as earths and stones, and trees and metals, just as thou must have seen these things weep when they are brought from a cold place into a hot one. As the messengers were returning with the conviction that their mission had been successful, they found an old hag named Thaukt sitting in a cavern, and begged her to weep Baldur out of Hel. But she answered,

'Thaukt will wail  
With arid tears  
Baldur's bale fire.  
Nought, quick or dead,  
By man's son gain I,  
Let Hela hold what's hers.'

It was strongly suspected that this hag was no other than Loki himself, who never ceased to work evil among the Æsir.

PART I, 'SENDING.' Arnold's changes in the time and sequence of events are obvious enough. In the *Edda*, Balder's funeral takes place immediately after his death—not after Hermod's return from his journey to Hela. As for the journey itself, Frigga (Frea) simply asks who will make the perilous adventure and Hermod straightway volunteers.

There is nothing of blind Höder's visit to Fensaler,<sup>7</sup> his lonely walk by the sea, and his later meeting with and commission to Hermod—not to mention the beautiful simile which likens Höder's quick touch of Hermod in the night to the spray of honeysuckle brushing the tired traveller's face,

Who shuffles through the deep dew-moisten'd dust,  
On a May evening, in the darken'd lanes.

Höder's suicide, the placing of his body on the funeral pyre beside Nanna and Balder, and his later touching appearance in the land of the dead are all Arnold's invention, to increase the unity and particularly the pathos of the story.

In the *Edda*, Nanna's death results from her grief at the funeral of Balder. Arnold, borrowing the 'gentle shafts of Artemis' from Homer, invents the appearance to her of Balder's spirit in a dream and her quiet death upon her bed, as

Frea, the mother of the Gods, with stroke  
Painless and swift, set free her airy soul,  
Which took, on Balder's track, the way below.

Another invention is Odin's withdrawal to Lidskialf—the place is described in the *Edda* as the site where 'Odin is

<sup>7</sup> This additional 'journey' of Hoder to Frea may have been suggested to Arnold by the account of Lok's previous visit to Fensaler (Mallet, p.446), which there was no need to incorporate elsewhere. There was also in Mallet (p.373) the story of the Vegtams-kviða or 'Wanderer's Lay,' describing Odin's own descent to Hela to consult the sybil about the coming fate of Balder—a theme made familiar by Gray. In any case, Arnold's invention is here all to the good. It develops the portrait of Hoder; and his frightened appeal to Hermod heightens the reconciliation of the two brothers at the end of the poem.

seated on his lofty throne' and 'sees over the whole world'<sup>8</sup>  
—and his effective return by night to Asgard:

And the stars came out in heaven,  
High over Asgard, to light home the King. . . .  
And terribly the hoofs of Sleipner rang  
Along the flinty floor of Asgard streets,  
And the Gods trembled on their golden beds  
Hearing the wrathful Father coming home.

PART 2, 'JOURNEY TO THE DEAD.' The opening description of the retirement of the Gods to Valhalla, of their life there, of the ride of the Valkyries, of Heimdall's watch over Bifrost, and of the council of Gladheim, is a mosaic from Mallet and the *Edda*.<sup>9</sup> The cutting of the wood for Balder's pyre is a classical reminiscence of the preparations made for the funeral of Patroklos in the twenty-third book of the *Iliad* (perhaps also of *Aeneid*, vi.180-84).

Hermod's journey is touched up from the account in the *Edda*. But the suggestive description of the ice-fields of Nifelheim and the twelve rivers flowing from the fountain of Vergelmer does not require a recollection of Virgil or Dante.<sup>10</sup>

The inhabitants of Hell are, of course, mentioned in the Norse myth, but they seem here rather to come from more classic sources. Part I had described 'the feeble, shadowy tribes' (recalling Homer's ἀμεινὰ κάρηνα,

<sup>8</sup> Mallet, p.406.

<sup>9</sup> Mallet, pp.95-6,104-05,409,412,421,427,429-30.

<sup>10</sup> See Mallet, p.401. Arnold calls the nearest river to Hela's wall the 'River of Roaring', the glossary of proper names in Mallet (p.552) says that 'Gjoll,' the name of the 'nearest' river (p.401) means 'sonorous, fulgid' The other names draw upon a footnote to p 401 and some correspondences in the glossary—such as 'Ylg(r),' the river of Howling.

and the 'solemn queen' Persephone) and the 'wailful ghosts'

Who all will flit, like eddying leaves, around—

a reminiscence of Virgil's account of the ghosts by the Styx:

*Quam multa in silvis autumni frigore primo  
Lapsa cadunt folia,*<sup>11</sup>

and of Milton's fallen angels:

Thick as autumnal leaves that strow the brooks,  
In Vallombrosa, where th' Etrurian shades,  
High over-arched embower.

Here in Part 2 Hermod is surrounded by swarms of

twittering ghosts,  
Women, and infants, and young men who died  
Too soon for fame, with white ungraven shields;  
And old men, known to glory.

The debt is to Homer's τετριγυῖα ψυχῇ and to Virgil's

*Matres atque viri, defunctaque corpora vita  
Magnanimum heroum, pueri innuptaeque puellae  
Impositique rogis iuvenes ante ora parentum.*<sup>12</sup>

These last lines draw upon *Odyssey*, xi.35-40. Balder's advice to Hermod:

<sup>11</sup> *Aeneid*, vi.309-10. Mr. Ralph E. C. Houghton in his essay, *The Influence of the Classics on the Poetry of Matthew Arnold*, Oxford, 1923, has indicated these and the immediately following parallels. See also W P Mustard, 'Homeric Echoes in . . . "Balder Dead,"' *Studies in Honor of Basil L. Gildersleeve*, Baltimore, 1902, pp.19-28.

<sup>12</sup> *Aeneid*, vi.306-08.



Better to live a serf, a captured man,  
 Who scatters rushes in a master's hall,  
 Than be a crown'd king here, and rule the dead

derives straightway from Achilles' advice to Odysseus.<sup>13</sup>

The ring which Balder gives Hermod to carry back to Odin is, in the *Edda*, of course the ring which Odin has already placed upon the funeral pyre. Nanna's gifts are omitted by Arnold for the very good reason that her spirit has not yet arrived in Hela's realm. Reference to her is reserved for the more tender second interview with Hermod in Part 3.

The two forceful similes of the cattle blocked in the snowy mountain-passes in October and of the traveller watching the slopes break through the valley mists at dawn are doubtless memory-pictures from Switzerland—possibly from the English Lakes.

PART 3, 'FUNERAL.' The transition-piece of Lok's taunting comment upon the returning Hermod is Arnold's own device. The account of the funeral itself is his elaboration of the mere outline sketch in the *Edda*, assisted by some classical borrowings. The funeral customs of the Norse are suggested in Mallet;<sup>14</sup> but such a specific touch as the ceremony of 'thrice in arms around the dead' derives from the *Aeneid*, xi.188. The gifts for the pyre follow the Norse tradition augmented by classical usages described by both Virgil (his description of the funerals of Misenus and of Pallas, for example)<sup>15</sup> and Homer (the funeral of Patroklos).<sup>16</sup>

13 *Odyssey*, xi.491, ἢ πᾶσιν νεκύεσσι καταφθιμένοισιν ἀνίσσειν.

14 P.213.

15 *Aeneid*, vi.212-35; and xi.80-98, 184-204.

16 *Iliad*, xxiii.

In the funeral speeches Arnold, again with the classics behind him, gives his most telling examples of the elaborate direct discourse which is perhaps his most conspicuous invention for the poem.

Odin's speech, the first of the addresses, has, it seems, its basis in Mallet's account of the *Vafthrúdnismál*.<sup>17</sup> In this story, Odin, in the disguise of Gangrad, asks his giant adversary 'what Odin whispered in the ear of his son Baldur before he had him placed on the funeral pile.' Arnold, perhaps from this cue, has Odin predict the Twilight of the Gods.

Thor, in return for being deprived of the blustering rôle given him in the *Edda*, is fully compensated by Arnold. It is he, not Hringhorn, who moves the ship out to sea. Previous to this, Thor pays tribute to Balder as the composer of strife, whom the *Edda* describes as 'the mildest, the wisest, and the most eloquent of all the Æsir,'<sup>18</sup> the one whose judgements cannot be altered. Thor's chariot is drawn by goats, as in the legend;<sup>19</sup> but the reins, in Arnold's hands, have become silver.<sup>20</sup>

Freya comes to weep her golden tears.<sup>21</sup> But the touching story of the faithless Oder—appropriate to her as the goddess of love—is brought forward from an earlier part of the *Edda*.<sup>22</sup> It is Arnold's compassion alone that has sup-

17 Mallet, p.364.

18 *Ibid.*, p.418.

19 *Ibid.*, p.417.

20 Thor's part in the ceremony is quite proper, because he is described (Mallet, p.448) as the one 'who hallowed the pile with Mjólnir.'

21 Mallet, pp.238 and 426. Mallet lists the golden tears of Freya as a typical Norse metaphor.

22 Mallet, p.426.

plied her the comforting speeches of Balder, which she will hear no more.

Why Regner? He was probably added in order that the race of heroes, as well as gods, might be represented. Arnold did not even have to read the Anglo-Saxon chronicles to find out Regner's history, for it is all supplied by Mallet.<sup>23</sup> Mallet chose Regner's (Ragnar Lodbrok's) Death Song<sup>24</sup> as his single effort to give an alliterative, line-for-line translation of Old Norse poetry—doubtless impressive to Arnold, because it brought him as near to the Norse originals as any of his research was to carry him. Regner was particularly fitted to appreciate Balder's ability as a minstrel, because he 'was no less distinguished for his skill in poetry, than in war and navigation. Many of his poems were long preserved in the north, and may be found inserted in the history of his life: and it is well known that he died no less like a poet than a hero.'<sup>25</sup> Brage's eloquence, in turn, is vouched for by the *Edda*.<sup>26</sup>

When morning comes the Gods find Mimir sitting by his fountain beneath the ash-tree Igdrasil<sup>27</sup>—a well 'in which wisdom and wit lie hidden.' Freya, to rebuke Odin's suggestion that Balder be returned by force, repeats the familiar story of the slaying of Ymir and of the creation;<sup>28</sup> and of the irrevocable gift to Hela of power over the nine

<sup>23</sup> Mallet, pp.383-4.

<sup>24</sup> The Death Song describes Regner's effort to rescue Thora, daughter of a chieftain of Gothland, from the captivity of a serpent. In order to protect himself from the venom of the serpent he put on shaggy trousers—a fact which Arnold forgets as quickly as he can. Ella, a Northumbrian prince, took Regner prisoner and threw him into a dungeon, where he was condemned to die by the bite of serpents. Aslauga was Regner's second wife

<sup>25</sup> Mallet, p 235

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.420-21

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, p 411.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, pp 98,404-05

worlds.<sup>29</sup> The plain description in the *Edda* of the general weeping for Balder:—‘just as thou must have seen these things weep when they are brought from a cold place into a hot one’—inspires one of Arnold’s best similes, that of the spring thaw.

Hermod searches the coast with Niord, the Norse Neptune, who reigned over sea and winds. The latter was the father of Freya and generally an important god, for whom the *Edda* asks devoted worship. Mallet says, ‘We find in the north, to this day, traces of the veneration which was there paid him.’<sup>30</sup> Indirectly Arnold’s treatment of his story at one point is rather revealing.<sup>31</sup>

The finding of Lok disguised as an old hag in the iron wood of Jarnvid brings in a description from the *Edda*.<sup>32</sup>

29 Ibid., p.423

30 Ibid., p.95.

31 Speaking of Niord, Arnold says:

He knows each frith, and every rocky creek  
Fringed with dark pines, and sands where seafowl scream.

In the *Edda*, Njord’s wife Skadi preferred the mountains to the sea; the two therefore agreed that they should pass together nine nights in the mountains, and then three by the shore. Returning from the mountains one night, Njord sang that

the howl of the wolf  
Methought sounded ill  
To the song of the swan-bird.

To which Skadi sang in reply:

Ne’er can I sleep  
In my couch on the strand,  
For the screams of the sea-fowl.  
The mew as he comes  
Every morn from the main  
Is sure to awake me.

Skadi then returned to dwell among the mountains. The seemingly objective description of ‘sands where seafowl scream’ is not perhaps so innocent as it looks. It may well indicate how much Arnold’s instinctive bent in ‘Balder’ was towards the tender, domestic sentiment that colours the entire treatment

32 Mallet, p.408.

With this incident the *Edda's* account of Balder's story breaks off.

Hermod's second journey to Hela's realm, where Hoder, Balder, and Nanna wait to talk with him, is wholly Arnold's addition. It fully establishes and concludes the tender and pathetic strain which dominates the poem. The treatment here, in the classic tradition of journeys to the dead, shows far more the influence of Homer and Virgil than that of the Norse myths. The prediction of the Twilight of the Gods and of the second Asgard repeats in detail familiar material from the *Edda*,<sup>33</sup> which says in passing, 'Baldur and Hödur shall also repair thither from the abode of death.' Even Arnold's 'dice' are accounted for: 'There too shall they find in the grass those golden tablets (orbs) which the Æsir once possessed.'

The last picture of Hermod's watching the departure of the three shades into Hell has something of the restrained pathos that marks the close of *Œdipus at Colonus* or *Paradise Lost*. And the last, stark sentence is in the epic tradition of the final lines of the *Iliad*.

Minor borrowings are too many to detail.<sup>34</sup> But the whole spirit of the classics is what really transforms 'Balder' from

33 Mallet, pp.103,451-8.

34 Mr. Houghton, with others, notes that Arnold's northern Bear 'which is alone not dipt in Ocean's stream' corresponds word for word to Homer's:

οἷη δ' ἄμμορός ἐστι λοετρῶν Ὠκεανοῖο;

that Nanna tries to embrace Balder as Aeneas does Creusa; that Hoder, like Achilles, walks alone 'along the margin of the roaring sea.' Hermod shakes the bridge over Giall's stream, as for Aeneas in the underworld: '*gemunt sub pondere cymba Sutulis, et multam accepit rimosa paludem.*' There are other notable borrowings such as Balder's disappearance 'like smoke' after Nanna sees him in her dream, which recalls the ghost of Patroklos fading from the sight of Achilles in the *Iliad* (xxiii) or Odysseus vainly reaching for the shade of his mother (*Odyssey*, xi).

a Norse poem into something vastly different. As in 'Sohrab,' of course, much of Arnold's care went into his elaborate similes.

On December 12, 1855, he wrote to his sister, Mrs. Forster:

I think 'Balder' will consolidate the peculiar sort of reputation that I got by 'Sohrab and Rustum,' and many will complain that I am settling myself permanently in that field of antiquity, as if there was no other. But I have in part done with this field in completing 'Balder,' and what I do next will be, if I can do it, wholly different.

I have had a letter from Arthur Stanley, who remarks on the similes much as you do, so I daresay what you both say is true; he likes 'Balder' as a whole better than 'Sohrab,' but thinks it too short; and this is true too, I think, and I must some day add a first book with an account of the circumstances of the death of Balder himself.<sup>35</sup>

Arnold's esteem for Norse poetry is expressed in *Celtic Literature* (pp.141-2): 'There is a fire, a sense of style, a distinction, in Icelandic poetry, which German poetry has not. Icelandic poetry, too, shows a powerful and developed technic.'

In July, 1876, he wrote to Miss Frances Arnold, 'The Bayreuth performance turns my mind longingly to very different matters, the Nibelungen ring, and Fafnir and Siegfried and Gudrune and Brunhilde, all of whom I had once hoped to touch in poetry. They and their story are all at full length in the series of operas Wagner is to give at Bayreuth, £45 a ticket, and they are all taken!' <sup>36</sup>

The magic fire round Brunnhilde's rock and the gleam

<sup>35</sup> *Letters* I.47-8.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, II.134.

of the Rheingold were Wagner's, not Arnold's. And it is, indeed, the fame of the Wagnerian cycle and the revived interest in the *Saga of the Volsungs and Nibelungs* that have tended to eclipse the reputation of 'Balder Dead.'

#### TRISTRAM AND ISEULT

'Tristram and Iseult' was composed largely on the Continent, probably in the late 'forties. It was completed in England, and published in the volume of 1852. Always a favourite with Arnold, it was regularly reprinted in 'collected' editions, and it was included in the *Selections*. When it appeared (with numerous alterations) in the volume of 1853, it was prefaced by a long quotation from Dunlop's *History of Fiction* giving an abstract of the mediæval legend. It will be convenient to consider the significance of this extract before proceeding to an account of the sources of the poem.

THE QUOTATION FROM DUNLOP. From the beginning Arnold was worried over the intelligibility of the story. It must be remembered that English readers were in general quite unacquainted with the legend, and that Arnold's poem is the earliest of all the modern renderings of the theme. It precedes Wagner's opera (1865) by thirteen years and Tennyson's treatment in 'The Last Tournament' (1872) by twenty years. Moreover, the confused mass of materials which the poet encountered when he began to look into the 'sources' and 'originals' of the tale may well have caused him a grave concern. He wrote to Clough (May 1, 1853), 'If I republish that poem I shall try to make

it more intelligible: I wish I had you with me to put marks against the places where something is wanted. The whole affair is by no means thoroughly successful.' <sup>1</sup> And later, August 25, 'He [Froude] recommends prefacing Tristram and Iseult with an extract from Dunlop's *Hist. of fiction* to tell the story, in preference to telling it in my own words.' <sup>2</sup>

Arnold had, in all probability, consulted Dunlop's *History* on his return to England when he brought with him the first draft of his new poem. Traces of Dunlop's influence may be seen at many points: notably, in the mispronunciation Týntagel, which, from Dunlop's 'Tintadiel,' he seems to have stressed on the first syllable—an error he was obliged later to correct at many points in the text of his poem; in the mention of Lancelot's castle of Joyous Gard; and, above all, in Dunlop's dislike of Iseult's treatment of Brangien, <sup>3</sup> whom Arnold therefore omitted from the story altogether.

The passage from Dunlop which Arnold professed to have used is of course but a brief abstract, made up of sentences chosen by him to illustrate the incidents he was employing. It was first introduced in the edition of 1853.

In the court of his uncle King Marc, the king of Cornwall, who at this time resided at the castle of Tyntagel, Tristram became expert in all knightly exercises.—The king of Ireland, at Tristram's solici-

<sup>1</sup> *Letters to Clough*, pp.135-6.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid*, p.140.

<sup>3</sup> That King Marc might not discover the truth about his bride, the virgin Brangien had taken Iseult's place on the wedding night. Iseult, to prevent all possibility of detection, delivered Brangien to two ruffians who, refusing to murder their captive according to orders, mercifully tied her to a tree, from which Palamedes released her. Dunlop comments, 'The character of the Queen of Cornwall can hardly excite love or compassion, as the savage atrocity of her conduct to Brangian [so spelled in Dunlop] starts up every moment in the recollection of the reader.'



tations, promised to bestow his daughter Iseult in marriage on King Marc. The mother of Iseult gave to her daughter's confidante a philtre, or love-potion, to be administered on the night of her nuptials. Of this beverage Tristram and Iseult, on their voyage to Cornwall, unfortunately partook. Its influence, during the remainder of their lives, regulated the affections and destiny of the lovers.—

After the arrival of Tristram and Iseult in Cornwall, and the nuptials of the latter with King Marc, a great part of the romance is occupied with their contrivances to procure secret interviews.—Tristram, being forced to leave Cornwall, on account of the displeasure of his uncle, repaired to Brittany, where lived Iseult with the White Hands.—He married her—more out of gratitude than love.—Afterwards he proceeded to the dominions of Arthur, which became the theatre of unnumbered exploits.

Tristram, subsequent to these events, returned to Brittany, and to his long-neglected wife. There, being wounded and sick, he was soon reduced to the lowest ebb. In this situation, he despatched a confidant to the queen of Cornwall, to try if he could induce her to follow him to Brittany, etc.—DUNLOP's *History of Fiction*.

SOURCES. But it must not be assumed that Arnold's first knowledge of the story came from Dunlop. He had, apparently, never encountered it in any form until his attention was drawn to it in a French magazine.

The sources indeed are partially revealed by Arnold himself. In a letter to Clough, dated May 1, 1853, he writes:

My version of Tristram and Iseult comes from an article in the *Revue de Paris*, on Fauriel, I think; the story of Merlin is imported from the *Morte d'Arthur*.<sup>4</sup>

Furthermore, in a letter of earlier date (November 5, 1852) he wrote to Mr. Hill:

<sup>4</sup> *Letters to Clough*, p.135.

I read the story of Tristram and Iseult some years ago at Thun in an article in a French Review on the romance literature: I had never met with it before, and it fastened upon me: when I got back to England I looked at the *Morte d'Arthur* and took what I could, but the poem was in the main formed, and I could not well disturb it.<sup>5</sup>

The source of the poem is therefore revealed as a series of articles by Théodore de La Villemarqué on '*Les poèmes gallois et les romans de la Table-Ronde*.' These are devoted to an account of Fauriel's work. It is the first article which is principally concerned with the Tristram legend.<sup>6</sup>

The passage which seems to have made the deepest impression on Arnold's imagination is the prose summary of the legend given near the beginning of the article. The passage which is laid under contribution by the poet is the following:

*Tristan fait ses premières armes en Cornouailles, à la cour du roi March son oncle, quand un chevalier irlandais appelé Morhoult s'y présente, réclamant un tribut injuste. Tristan le combat et le tue; mais, ayant reçu dans la cuisse un dard empoisonné, et ne trouvant pas en Cornouailles de médecin assez habile pour guérir sa blessure, il se déguise en joueur de harpe et se rend en Irlande. C'est là qu'il voit la belle Yseult, dont il fait, à son retour, un portrait si flatteur à son oncle, que le roi veut l'épouser. Tristan, chargé de la demander, part, déguisé en marchand, et il revient en Cornouailles avec la future du roi, quand, ayant porté par mégarde à ses lèvres et présenté à la princesse irlandaise une coupe contenant un philtre magique destiné à March et confié à Brangien, servante d'Yseult, ils sentent aussitôt l'amour couler dans leurs veines. Peu de jours après les noces, le sénéchal puis le nain de la cour s'aperçoivent de la liaison coupable de Tristan et d'Yseult, en informent le roi et lui ménagent l'occasion de les surprendre; mais Tristan déjoue leurs ruses. Enfin les deux amans sont pris, et on les*

5 Printed by R. E. C. Houghton in *The Times Literary Supplement*, May 19, 1932, p.368.

6 *Revue de Paris*, series 3, VOL. XXXIV., 1841, pp.266-82; cf. pp.335-48.

*mène au supplice, quand le chevalier trouve moyen de s'échapper et revient délivrer la reine. Trois ans s'écoulent, au bout desquels, un bon ermite ayant réconcilié les deux époux, l'amant reçoit ordre de ne plus reparaitre à la cour. Il y reparait pourtant; il trouve moyen, sous l'habit d'un fou, de tromper tous les yeux et de renouer ses liaisons avec Yseult. Trois barons s'en doutent et suggèrent au roi leurs soupçons. La reine, pour les confondre, se met sous la protection du roi Arthur et des chevaliers de la Table-Ronde, et propose à son mari de prouver son innocence par un serment solennel. Le jour marqué, comme la suite de March et celle d'Arthur se rendaient au lieu désigné, Tristan, déguisé en mendiant, s'offre, au passage d'un gué, pour transporter la reine. Elle accepte, et, sur un signe d'elle son amant l'ayant laissé tomber, elle peut sans parjure faire serment qu'elle n'a jamais eu de familiarité avec personne, excepté avec son époux et le maladroît mendiant qui vient de la jeter par terre. La reine ainsi justifiée, tout le monde se livre à la joie: des joûtes ont lieu. Tristan y vient prendre part sous un déguisement nouveau, et bat l'un après l'autre tous les chevaliers de la Table-Ronde; Arthur, émerveillé de sa bravoure, propose une grande récompense à quiconque le lui amènera, mais il évite prudemment une nouvelle rencontre et s'éloigne. Quoique l'innocence d'Yseult soit reconnue, son amant n'est point rappelé à la cour; il se retire dans la Petite-Bretagne et prend le parti de se marier à la fille d'Houel, roi du pays, qui porte aussi le nom d'Yseult. Toutefois c'est en vain qu'il essaie d'oublier son premier amour, c'est en vain qu'il court les aventures périlleuses; au lieu d'une distraction, il y trouve une blessure mortelle. La femme du roi March peut seule le guérir; il l'envoie chercher. Mais la fille du roi de la Petite-Bretagne, qui a surpris le secret des amours de son mari, lui fait accroire que la reine de Cornouailles refuse de se rendre à ses x, et Tristan meurt de chagrin.<sup>7</sup>*

The passages of the poem which are concerned with the events of Tristram's life prior to his final illness and the arrival of Iseult are as follows:

(1) The scene on shipboard and the drinking of the potion.

<sup>7</sup> La Villemarqué, op. cit., pp.274-5.

(2) A tryst in the plesaunce-walks of Tyntagil, followed by the flight of Tristram. At parting the lovers have one final embrace, a 'long, wild kiss—their last.'

(3) The marriage with Iseult of the White Hands.

(4) His career in the army of King Arthur, and the battle against the Roman Emperor.

(5) A scene in the Breton Forest, near a chapel and a fountain, where, as he stoops to bathe his brow in the cold spring, he fancies that he sees reflected the face of Queen Iseult.

Of these five episodes the first three are sufficiently accounted for by the French summary which Arnold used. The necessity of linking them together into a connected story is obviated by the delirium of Tristram. The incidents selected by Arnold have since become so familiar in other treatments of the legend—notably Wagner's—that the reader is likely to view them in the light of scenes already familiar to him, and fail to realize how very simple is the material set forth by our poet. It is, as we have said, noteworthy that Arnold omits one of the indispensable persons of the drama, '*Brangien, servante d'Iseult*,' to whom the fatal potion has been entrusted by Iseult's mother. The reader who knew the story only from Arnold would be at a loss to account for the fact that the cup from which Tristram and Iseult drink in apparent ignorance contains the magic draught or love-potion intended for King Marc. Again, the figure of Brangien is omitted from the incident in the 'plesaunce-walks,' in which no explanation is given of the realization by the lovers that they have been 'betrayed—out-plann'd.'

The third incident is treated by Arnold, as by all others

who have dealt with the legend, with considerable freedom. Each narrator of the old material must interpret Tristram's marriage as best he may. But it may be pointed out here that Arnold did not care to use the feature of the old story which attributed the death of Tristram to 'chagrin,' caused by the deception of Iseult of the White Hands in leading him to believe that Queen Iseult had refused his summons to come and heal him.

The fourth incident is the one most difficult to account for. It is certainly not derived from La Villemarqué, who says only of Arthur that he was amazed at the prowess of Tristram in a series of tournaments in which Tristram (in disguise) overthrows all the knights of the Round Table. We suspect Arnold's incident to have been based on Dunlop's remark in the *History of Fiction*, 'Afterwards he proceeded to the dominions of Arthur, which became the theatre of unnumbered exploits,' in the course of which Tristram served Marc in the latter's campaign against the Saxons. With this there probably mingled some recollection of King Arthur's campaigns which are carried into Italy.

In the poet's account of the origin of his work he confesses to the influence of a certain portion of the *Morte d'Arthur*; but it may be doubted whether he had read much more of the Tristram legend in Malory than concerned the particular incidents of the story which he had already selected. It will be recalled that he told Hill that the 'poem was in the main formed' before his return to England, and that he 'could not well disturb it.' All the remarks to Hill are in the nature of an explanation of his failure to conform to the story as set forth by Malory.

What probably happened was that, finding himself hopelessly confused by the Tristram story in the *Morte d'Arthur*, the poet turned for assistance to Dunlop's *History of Fiction*, and used it in the way to which we have already referred, that is, for the expansion of certain incidents and for details not found in La Villemarqué.

The account of Tristram as fighting under the leadership of Arthur forms an independent incident, in which there is nothing to disturb the outlines of the story as already sketched by Arnold. Rather it tends to emphasize Tristram's attempt to escape from the bonds of a fatally-rooted love.

The fifth incident, as enumerated above, seems to be a composite of several forest-scenes in earlier versions of the story, in which the lovers are sometimes described as separated from each other, and sometimes as residing together in the woods. It is indicative of Arnold's drastic simplification of the story that he makes no reference to any meeting of the lovers from their parting on the 'plesaunce-walks' to their final reunion at the death-bed of Tristram. The fancied reflection of Iseult's face in the waters of the spring, a scene original with Arnold, may well have been intended as evidence of the hero's madness, of which much is made in the mediæval poems.

PART II. The portion of the poem which troubled Arnold most was Part II. 'I am by no means satisfied with *Tristram* in the second part myself' he says to Mr. Hill. Desiring to expand this portion of the story, and departing widely from the traditional treatment of the death of the lovers, he was thrown back upon his own resources. The

final dialogue, in spite of revision, remained quite unimpassioned. The lines are mild and laboured at the very point where the poem should take fire and blaze with mediæval splendour. Failure here makes the whole poem seem to many readers cold and lifeless. It was of course destined to suffer from comparison with a later and more romantic treatment of the *Liebestod*.

The passages in Arnold's poem which touch the emotions of the reader are, paradoxically, those with which the lovers have no immediate connexion. Thus in Part I, the description of the sleeping children is in the poet's happiest vein, and serves a dramatic purpose by its contrast with the wakeful lovers in another part of the castle. The innocence and peace of the sleeping children set over against the passion and death of the lovers is, in its way, no less effective a use of contrast than that in 'The Eve of St. Agnes.'

A second passage, providing a similar contrast, appears at the end of the second part, and forms its conclusion. It describes the flapping tapestry on the wall of the room where the dead lovers lie. The arras, by a daring invention of the poet, represents the youthful Tristram hunting the boar. It is of course not found in any preceding version of the Tristram legend. It may well have been suggested to the poet, consciously or unconsciously, by Byron's lines in *The Siege of Corinth*, in which Francesca appears before Alp on the eve of the battle. Her ghostlike appearance is described (lines 620ff.) as being

Like the figures on arras, that gloomily glare,  
 Stirr'd by the breath of the wintry air,  
 So seen by the dying lamp's fitful light,  
 Lifeless, but life-like, and awful to sight;

As they seem, through the dimness, about to come down  
 From the shadowy wall where their images frown;  
 Fearfully flitting to and fro,  
 As the gusts on the tapestry come and go.

This passage we know to have been a favourite with Arnold, since he later incorporated it, together with the incident of which it is a part, in his *Selections from Byron* in the Golden Treasury Series (1881). Hunter and hound also figure on the tapestry in 'The Eve of St. Agnes' and in Tennyson's 'Palace of Art' (lines 60-64).

The incident is related, in a different way, to the poet's own 'Church of Brou,' which was published with it. The hero, who, like Tristram, had been wont 'to hunt the boar in the crisp woods till eve,' is conceived to have a kind of posthumous, supernatural relation with the painted figures in the traceried moonlit windows which look down upon the marble sleep of his Duchess and himself, until the church itself becomes as it were the 'glimmering verge of heaven.' So the young hunter in the tapestry gazes out, as if with wonder, upon the 'mullioned windows clear,' and then upon a

kneeling lady fair,  
 And on his pillows that pale Knight,  
 Who seems of marble on a tomb.

Other similar resemblances may be found, particularly in poetic style. The words of the tapestried figure,

What place is this, and who are they?

recalling the question and answer of the princely pair,

What is this? we are in bliss—forgiven—  
 Behold the pavement of the courts of Heaven!



Iseult no less than Tristram is made to seem almost a part of the inanimate world about her as she says to her dying lover, that she will become 'a faded watcher' by his pillow or a 'statue' on his chapel-floor.

We do not know which of the two poems is the earlier, though Arnold's inclusion of the 'Church of Brou' among the Early Poems may possibly be taken as indicating priority of composition. We incline, however, to the belief that both poems belong to the same general period of the poet's development, and may even have come into being contemporaneously.

Reverting to the discussion of the ghostly huntsman in the tapestry, it is important to point out that the passage underwent a considerable alteration at the hands of the poet. In the first edition the figure is not represented as speaking, or rather as seeming to speak. The tone of the passage is so different from that of the more familiar editions that it is well to see it as a whole in its original form. Readers may perhaps be found who prefer the simpler version.

The air of the December night  
Steals coldly around the chamber bright:  
Swinging with it, in the light  
Shines the ghostlike tapestry.  
And there upon the wall you see  
A stately huntsman, clad in green,  
And round him a fresh forest scene.  
'Tis noon with him, and yet he stays  
With his pack round him, and delays,  
As rooted to the earth, nor sounds  
His lifted horn, nor cheers his hounds  
Into the tangled glen below.

Yet in the sedgy bottom there  
Where the deep forest stream creeps slow  
Fring'd with dead leaves and mosses rare,  
The wild boar harbours close, and feeds.

He gazes down into the room  
With heated cheeks and flurried air—  
Who is that kneeling lady fair?  
And on his pillows that pale knight  
Who seems of marble on a tomb?  
How comes it here, this chamber bright,  
Through whose mullion'd windows clear  
The castle court all wet with rain,  
The drawbridge, and the moat appear,  
And then the beach, and mark'd with spray  
The sunken reefs, and far away  
The unquiet bright Atlantic plain?—

He stares and stares, with troubled face  
At the huge gleam-lit fireplace,  
At the bright iron-figur'd door,  
And the blown rushes on the floor.

Has then some glamour made him sleep,  
And sent him with his dogs to sweep,  
By night, with boisterous bugle peal,  
Through some old, sea-side, knightly hall,  
Not in the free greenwood at all?  
That knight's asleep, and at her prayer  
That lady by the bed doth kneel:  
Then hush, thou boisterous bugle peal!

The rest remained unaltered.

The second part of the poem, as Arnold finally left it, enshrines a passage which originally had nothing to do with the story of Tristram and Iseult.

Yes, now the longing is o'erpast,  
Which, dogg'd by fear and fought by shame,  
Shook her weak bosom day and night . . .

The entire sixteen lines which constitute this passage were originally the first half of the poet's 'Lines written by a Death-Bed,' a poem which appeared in the edition of 1852. The lyric was never reprinted in its original form, these sixteen lines having been permanently cut off from the beginning of it. But in the edition of 1869, published seventeen years after the composition of the poem, Arnold inserted the lines in the second part of 'Tristram and Iseult,' with the intention, no doubt, of lending force and fire to a rather sluggish passage. His judgement in attempting to suture them into the context is no easier to commend than his taste in applying the sentiments to the life and character of Iseult.

This long discussion of the sources of Part II, and the changes later made in it may serve to illustrate the anxious concern which the poet felt over a portion of the poem with which he had confessed himself, in 1852, to be 'by no means satisfied.'

PART III. ISEULT OF BRITTANY. The first draft of the earlier portion of Part III, covering two pages and written with a lead pencil, is in the Yale MS., and is printed below. It ends, as will be noticed, with what is now line 63 of that part,

And led them home over the darkening heath.

The incident is wholly original with Arnold. It is perhaps natural to infer that this fragment constituted originally the whole of Part III. If this be true, the remaining lines of the poem as we now have it, including the incident of Merlin and Vivien, were an afterthought. In the manuscript

there is of course no hint of the subject of 'the old-world Breton history' told by Iseult to her children. The couplet,

A year had flown, and in the chapel old  
Lay Tristram and queen Iseult dead and cold,

which now stands, in altered form, at the beginning of Part III, seems to have been written in the margin of the same manuscript as if it were perhaps a transition added later.

Part III has been criticized as having no relation to the first two sections of the poem; but it must have been, from the beginning, an essential part of Arnold's plan. The younger Iseult had interested him all along, and he never, apparently, had any thought of omitting her altogether from the story, as he had omitted Brangien. Most modern poets who deal with the Tristram legend have declined to follow the mediæval account of the second Iseult, whose lie to her dying husband respecting the black and white sails they find it difficult to deal with in a sympathetic fashion.

Of the story of the black and white sails Arnold learned nothing from La Villemarqué, nor of course from Malory, who gives an entirely different account of the death of Tristram. If we trust his own words, Arnold did not even notice the incident in Dunlop, for he wrote to Swinburne, July 26, 1882, shortly before reading that poet's *Tristram of Lyonesse*,

It will be with no common ardour that I shall turn to your Tristram. I suppose you have taken the *sails* as the issue of your story; a beautiful way of ending, which I should perhaps have used, had I known of it, but I did not.<sup>8</sup>

8 Printed by Sir Edmund Gosse in *The Times Literary Supplement*, August 12, 1920, p 517.

We have seen a letter from Swinburne to Arnold (July 19, 1882), in which he says that he had admired Arnold's 'Tristram' as a boy at Eton, and that he would not have attempted another treatment of the story, had he not felt that there was an aspect of it not touched upon by Arnold.

Arnold's conception of the character of Iseult of Britanny was, in any case, quite inconsistent with the deception of Tristram by which, as a result, he died '*de chagrin*.' There is even a human appeal in the desolation of the later Iseult, which is wanting in the more queenly splendour of her rival. In the final scene of the story there is no distracting element of magic, which, thrilling as it is in earlier phases, tends to remove the legend from the sphere of our common interests. It is the pity rather than the terror of the tragic dilemma which is developed by Arnold, and the third part, with its touching picture of uncomplaining suffering, has its own characteristic charm. The children, as in the earlier part, are delightful.

Part III, as found in the Yale MS., follows:

The year had travell'd round, & one bright day  
Drew Iseult forth—her children were at play

<sup>a</sup>  
In that green circular opening in the heath  
Which borders the sea shore—a country path

<sup>fields</sup>  
Steals Creeps over it from the till'd land behind—

<sup>are</sup>  
The opening's grassy banks were soft inclined  
Yet low—& from the bottom yet to one standing in it  
But their slope was not deep—and far & near

<sup>goes spreading</sup>  
The lone unbroken view stretch'd bright & clear

~~all the~~                      hollow  
 Over the waste: but where this ~~the~~ open ground  
                  leaves            encircling  
 First meets the fringing heath at once all round

Is light                      Is green & clear—the heather which all round  
 & green                      The heather disappears, and the pale grass  
 Creeps                      Blooms thickly, grows not here  
                  Is strewn with rocks & many a shiverd mass  
                  Of vein'd white gleaming quartz, & here & there

Sprinkled with holly trees & juniper  
                  In the smooth centre  
 Down in the middle of the hollow stood  
 With scarlet berries bright the fellfare's food  
 Three hollies side by side, & made a screen  
 Where the sun's rays ~~fl~~ struck full & flash'd back keen.  
 Under the burnish'd hollies Iseult stands  
 Watching her children play: their little hands  
 Are busy gathering spars of quartz, and streams  
 Of stagshorn for their hats: anon, with screams  
 Of mad delight they drop their spoils & bound  
 Among the holly clumps & broken ground  
 Racing full speed, & startling in their rush  
 The fellfares & the speckled mistle thrush  
 Out of their glossy coverts: but when now  
 Their cheeks grew <sup>9</sup> flush'd, & over each hot brow  
 Under the feathered hats of the sweet pair  
<sup>10</sup> In blinding masses showered the golden hair—  
 Then Iseult call'd them to her and the three  
 Clustered under the holly screen, & she  
 Told them an old world Breton history  
 A year had flown and in the chapel old  
 Lay Tristram & queen Iseult dead & cold

<sup>9</sup> Over were.

<sup>10</sup> The next six lines are written along the left-hand margin of the sheet.

11 Warm in their mantles wrapt, the three stay'd there  
 Under the hollies in the clear still air—  
 Mantles with those deep furs rich glistening  
 Which Venice ships do from swarth Egypt bring.  
 Long they stay'd still then, pacing at their eyes [*sic*]  
 Mov'd up & down under their glossy trees  
 But still as they pursued their warm dry road  
 From Iseult's lips the unbroken story flow'd  
 And still the children listend their blue eyes  
 Fix'd on their mother's face in wide surprize—  
 Nor did their looks stray once to the seaside  
 Nor to the brown heaths round them warm & wide  
 Nor to the snow which though 'twas all away  
 From th'open waste, white by the hedgerows lay—  
 Nor to the shining seafowl that with screams  
 Came in from where the bright Atlantic gleams  
 Swooping to landward nor to where, quite clear  
 The fell-fares settled on the thickets near;  
 And they would still have listened till dark night  
 Came keen & chill down on the heather bright,  
 But when the red glow on the sea grew cold  
 And the grey turrets of the castle old  
 Look'd sternly thro: the frosty evening air  
 Then Iseult took by the hand those children fair  
 And brought her tale to an end, & found the path  
 And led them home over the darkening heath.

THE STORY OF MERLIN AND VIVIEN. In a letter to Clough (May 1, 1853), Arnold says, 'The story of Merlin is imported from the *Morte d'Arthur*,' but here his memory must have played him false, for there is nothing in Malory's account of Merlin and Nimue (Book IV.1) which could have supplied any of the important details in the story related by Arnold. Indeed the only passage where a definite

indebtedness to Malory can be shown is in the statement that Nimue was 'ever passing weary' of Merlin.

The source from which Arnold's story is ultimately derived is the mediæval romance of *Merlin*. This work, however, he had never read; he knew it only from an essay of La Villemarqué, whose '*Visite au Tombeau de Merlin*' was published in the *Revue de Paris* in 1837.<sup>12</sup> In this instance, as in that of the Tristram story proper, he appears to have used a volume of the collected magazines. Tennyson's idyll, 'Merlin and Vivien' could not have influenced Arnold, for it was not printed till 1859, seven years after 'Tristram and Iseult.'

The portion of La Villemarqué's article which inspired Arnold's lines is the paragraph near the end of section 2:

*Lors commença Merlin à deviser, et la damoiselle moult grande joie en eut, et lui montra plus grand semblant de l'aimer qu'elle n'avait fait auparavant, et tant qu'un jour advint qu'ils s'en allaient main à main par la forêt de Brocélian, et ils trouvèrent un buisson d'aubépine qui était tout chargé de fleurs, et ils s'assirent à l'ombre des aubépines, sur l'herbe verte, et jouèrent; et Merlin mit son chef au giron de la damoiselle, et elle le commença à tâtonner, tant qu'il s'endormit; puis se leva, et fit un cercle de sa guimpe autour du buisson et autour de Merlin, et commença ses enchantemens tels que lui-même lui avait appris, et fit neuf fois le cercle, et par neuf fois l'enchantement, et puis s'alla seoir auprès de lui, et lui mit la tête en son giron, et quand il se réveilla, il regarda autour de lui, et lui fut avis qu'il était enclos dans la plus forte tour du monde.<sup>13</sup>*

In the letter to Hill (November 5, 1852), quoted above, Arnold remarks,

<sup>12</sup> Series 2, VOL. XLI., pp. 45-62. He may have seen La Villemarqué's *L'Enchanteur Merlin*, as Mrs. Sells suggests.

<sup>13</sup> *Revue*, pp. 52-3, quoting the fifteenth-century *Roman de Merlin*.



The story of Merlin, of which I am particularly fond, was brought in on purpose to relieve the poem which would else I thought have ended too sadly; but perhaps the new element introduced is too much.

The Merlin incident was thus an afterthought; but no reader of judgement would, we incline to think, be disposed to criticize Arnold for the introduction of this portion of the story. Its appropriateness in the mouth of the later Iseult, who herself has witnessed and now bears in memory the overmastering and supernatural power of love upon her husband—himself the victim of its magic force—need not be stressed for modern readers. The passage may, indeed, be interpreted as her conscious, though indirect, presentation of her own case to Tristram's children. The fate of Merlin is the counterpart of her own, for she, too, has been drawn into the charmed circle of a disastrous love, and its bondage endures. It may not serve, as the poet wished it to do, to relieve the sadness of the story, but it is a felicitous example of that apparent calm in which, he would have us assume, Iseult passed the remainder of her days.

#### SAINT BRANDAN

This, the last of the poet's narrative poems, was published in *Fraser's Magazine* for July, 1860. The poem is also found in pamphlet form, with the imprint of J. S. Seaton and Co.:

Saint Brandan. / By / Matthew Arnold. / London: / E. W. & A. Skipworth. / 1867 /

There are eleven pages, and a brown wrapper bearing the same words as those on the title-page. The pamphlet is

probably, like the similar issue of 'Geist's Grave,' a forgery, printed in the decade of the 1890's, in order to catch the attention of book-collectors.<sup>1</sup>

Arnold's attention was first drawn to the legend of Saint Brandan by Renan, who, in his essay, *La poésie des races celtiques*,<sup>2</sup> had declared it to be 'une des plus étonnantes créations de l'esprit humain et l'expression la plus complète peut-être de l'idéal celtique.'<sup>3</sup> With Renan's volume, *Essais de morale et de critique*, of which this essay formed the conclusion, Arnold, owing to his now fully developed interest in Celtic matters, was already acquainted in 1859. He recommends it to Mrs. Forster as the 'best book' of Renan for her to read, and adds, 'I have read few things for a long time with more pleasure than a long essay with which the book concludes—"Sur la poésie des races celtiques."'<sup>4</sup>

In speaking of the sympathy of the Celtic peoples, Renan writes,

*Ils ont eu pitié même de Judas. Saint Brandan le rencontra sur un rocher au milieu des mers polaires: il passe là un jour par semaine pour se rafraîchir des feux de l'enfer; un drap qu'il avait donné en aumône à un lépreux est suspendu devant lui et tempère ses souffrances.*<sup>5</sup>

Renan comments on the union of the visionary quality of the Celt with the realistic note of the mediæval explorer.

*Au milieu de ces rêves apparaît avec une surprenante vérité le sentiment pittoresque des navigations polaires: la transparence de la mer,*

1 See Carter and Pollard, *An Enquiry into the Nature of Certain Nineteenth Century Pamphlets*, London, 1934, pp.161-2.

2 First printed in *Revue des Deux Mondes*, tome v, seconde série de la nouvelle période, February 1, 1854, pp.473-506.

3 *Essais de morale et de critique*, Paris, 1859, p.446.

4 *Letters* I.p.112.

5 *Essais de morale et de critique*, pp.594-5.

*les aspects des banquises et des îles de glace fondant au soleil, les phénomènes volcaniques de l'Islande, les jeux des cétacés . . .*<sup>6</sup>

We may think of Arnold as wishing to exhibit a similar union of qualities in this poem. Thus the realism used in describing the misery of the leper mingles with the mysticism of the monastery bells<sup>7</sup> heard among the farthest Hebrides. Arnold would perhaps have liked to exercise for the nonce something of Coleridge's wizardry in drawing the dim figure descried writhing in agony upon the star-lit iceberg; but such power was not given him.

After reading Renan's essay, Arnold probably had recourse to the work of Thomas Wright, a Celtic scholar who had been more than once praised by Renan, and who had edited the English version of the *Brandan*, *Saint Brandan: a mediæval legend of the sea in English verse and prose*, Percy Society, 1844.<sup>8</sup>

Arnold employed but few of the details of the ancient story. He reduces the days of Judas' immunity from punishment to one hour a year on Christmas night. Joppa as the scene of Judas' alms-giving is not found in any of the *Brandan* stories with which we are acquainted; but the *Life, Character and Death of Judas*<sup>9</sup> begins, 'Judas Iscariot was descended from one Simon, a tanner, living near Joppa.' After adventures in Iscariot Judas returned to Joppa.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., p.445.

<sup>7</sup> 'Chaque île est un monastère.' Ibid., p.444.

<sup>8</sup> A partial bibliography of the legend is given by Professor Joseph Dunn in the *Catholic Historical Review*, VOL VI, January, 1921.

<sup>9</sup> Third Edition, 1724.

## THE NECKAN

'The Neckan' was first published in the volume of 1853, where it immediately precedes 'The Forsaken Merman,' with which it is closely related not only in theme but by derivation from a common source. The two, though widely different in poetic value, were evidently intended as companion-pieces. The ballad assumed its final form only in 1869, at which time the stanza describing the budding of the staff and that embodying the merman's moral reflection were added. These two stanzas are found written in ink in a copy of the volume of 1854, which the poet later presented to his son Thomas,<sup>1</sup> who died in November, 1868. The date of these additions is unknown.

Like 'The Forsaken Merman,' the story may be derived from two poems in George Borrow's *Romantic Ballads translated from the Danish*, entitled respectively 'The Merman' and 'The Deceived Merman.' The former tells the story of a sea-creature who wooed and won a mortal bride, while she was attending church, and how she sank with him into the depths of the sea, but there is no mention of any desire on his part for salvation. This, however, might have been suggested by the distress of Margaret (in the second poem) over the unholy union which she had contracted. Arnold was probably acquainted with and perhaps unconsciously influenced by the theme of Fouqué's *Undine* (1811).

Professor Clyde K. Hyder has pointed out to us, however, that some of the material for the poem could have been derived from Thomas Keightley's *The Fairy Mythol-*

1 This volume is in the Yale Collection.

ogy, London, 1828 (pp.234-7), and from Benjamin Thorpe's *Northern Mythology*, London, 1852.<sup>2</sup>

The incident of the budding staff, in the edition of 1869, may have been suggested by the Tannhäuser legend, which tells of the Pope's refusal to pardon the former denizen of the Venusberg till his staff shall put forth a leaf and bud. When the miracle occurs, it is already too late to save the penitent, who has returned to the heathen goddess. Wagner's *Tannhäuser* was produced in 1845, and with this Arnold may very well have been acquainted. He doubtless read or reread Heine's version of the Tannhäuser story in '*Les Dieux en exil*,'<sup>3</sup> when in the spring of 1863 he was combing the *Revue des Deux Mondes* for material for a lecture on Heine. But it was not necessary for him to go to German literature for the myth of the budding staff, since he must have been familiar with it through Swinburne's '*Laus Veneris*' (1866), which might thus have supplied the suggestion for the two added stanzas.

We are inclined to think, however, that Arnold either read or had his attention called to a passage in Jacob Grimm's *Deutsche Mythologie*, which Professor Hyder has noted for us:

*Wie der pabst dem Tannhäuser durch den dürren stecken die hofnung abschneidet, sagt auch nach schwed. tradition der priester dem spielenden neck: 'eh wird dieser rohrstab den ich in der hand halte, grünen und blühen, als du erlösung erlangst,' trauernd wirft der neck die harfe hin und weint. der priester aber reitet fort, und bald beginnt sein stab in laub und blute auszuschlagen, da kehrt er um, dem neck das wunder zu verkünden, der nun die ganze nacht über frohe weisen spielt.'*<sup>4</sup>

<sup>2</sup> See II, 198-9; III.78-80.

<sup>3</sup> See *Revue des Deux Mondes*, tome ii, seconde série de la nouvelle période, April 1, 1853, pp.14-19.

<sup>4</sup> Jacob Grimm, *Deutsche Mythologie*, Gottingen, 1854, II. 888 n.

*Neckan* is not an English word; the correct form is Nicker (Old English *nicor*), a demon of the sea, legends regarding whom were current in various countries of Europe down to the nineteenth century.

## THE FORSAKEN MERMAN

Although this poem was first printed in the volume of 1849, Arnold never thereafter classified it with the Early Poems, but included it, together with 'The Church of Brou' and 'The Sick King in Bokhara' among the Narrative Poems, perhaps by way of eking out that group.<sup>1</sup>

The ultimate source of the myth here treated is an ancient Danish ballad, 'The Deceived Merman'; but the precise form in which Arnold became acquainted with it is not readily determined. He may very well have known the story as set forth by Hans Christian Andersen in *The True Story of my Life*.<sup>2</sup>

There is an old Danish folks-song of Agnete and the Merman, which bore an affinity to my own state of mind, and to the treatment of which I felt an inward impulse. The song tells that Agnete wandered solitarily along the shore, when a merman rose up from the waves and decoyed her by his speeches. She followed him to the bottom of the sea, remained there seven years, and bore him seven children. One day, as she sat by the cradle, she heard the church bells sounding down to her in the depths of the sea, and a longing seized her heart to go to church. By her prayers and tears she induced the merman to conduct her to the upper world again, promis-

1 The division into stanzas was made clearer in the earlier editions by the indentation of the first lines of the respective stanzas; this indentation was discarded in 1869, at which time exclamation-points were added, perhaps too abundantly.

2 *The True Story of my Life*: a Sketch. By Hans Christian Andersen. Translated by Mary Howitt. Boston, 1847, p.104. Our attention was called to this by the late Miss Josephine Whiteside.

ing soon to return. He prayed her not to forget his children, more especially the little one in the cradle; stopped up her ears and her mouth, and then led her upwards to the sea-shore. When, however, she entered the church, all the holy images, as soon as they saw her, a daughter of sin and from the depths of the sea, turned themselves round to the walls. She was affrighted, and would not return, although the little ones in her home below were weeping.

There is hardly enough here to account for the inspiration of the poem; but there are two other forms in which the young poet may have known the story, though neither possesses a trace of the peculiar charm which he infused into it. The ballad of 'The Deceived Merman' was translated from the Old Danish by George Borrow, and published in his *Romantic Ballads translated from the Danish*, which was first printed at Norwich in 1826.<sup>3</sup> Borrow had however, told the story a year or more before in a review of Just Mathias Thiele's *Danske Folkesagn*,<sup>4</sup> and it is from the story as told in this way rather than from the ballad itself that Arnold may have derived his first information about it.<sup>5</sup> Borrow's prose account of the legend is as follows:

There lived once two poor people near Friesenborg, in the district of Aarhus in Jutland, who had one only child, a daughter, called Grethe. One day that they sent her down to the sea-shore to fetch some sand, as she was washing her apron, a merman arose out of the water. His beard was greener than the salt sea; his shape was pleasing, and he spoke to the girl in a kind and friendly tone,

3 The parallel of this to Arnold's poem was first noted by Miss Louise I. Guiney in the *Nation* (London), December 14, 1907, pp. 398-9.

4 *The Universal Review*, VOL. II., January, 1825, pp. 563-4.

5 The reasons for this view are fully set forth by Herbert Wright in the *Modern Language Review*, VOL. XIII., January, 1918, p. 90.

## SONNETS





## PREFATORY NOTE TO 'SONNETS'

THE group of fourteen sonnets was one of the features of the volume of *New Poems*, 1867. In the edition of 1869 they were re-arranged, and some of them transferred to the class of Elegiac Poems; but the present order was adopted in 1877, and was not again altered. Eight of them were included in the *Selections* (1878).

Certain of these sonnets were composed on Sundays in the summer of 1863. No less than ten entries in the notebooks relating to this group are found between June 21 and August 25. About half the sonnets are inspired by the poet's reading.

Arnold's view of the sonnet form is expressed in an unpublished letter<sup>1</sup> to John Payne (n.d.). 'The sonnet is an alluring form, but I doubt if it does not, when too much followed, disincline one for the others, which, after all, can do what it cannot do. On the other hand, in no form does the composer mark more clearly whether he is essentially poetical or prosaic.'

### AUSTERITY OF POETRY

Arnold derived the anecdote on which this sonnet is based from Antoine-Frédéric Ozanam, who published the substance of his *Poètes franciscains en Italie au treizième siècle* in the French magazine entitled *Le Correspondant*, during the years 1847-51. An essay called '*Le bienheureux Jacopone de Todi*' (March 10, 1851), dealing with Giacompo dei Benedetti, called Giacompo da Todi (*floruit* 1268-98) opens

1 In the Yale Papers.

with the suggestion that the poet was a precursor of Dante. Later this passage is found,

*Il arriva qu'un jour de l'année 1268, la ville de Todi célébrait des jeux publics. La jeune épouse du jurisconsulte fut invitée; elle prit place sur une estrade couverte de nobles femmes, pour jouir de la fête et pour en faire le plus aimable ornement. Tout à coup l'estrade s'écroule. Au bruit des madriers qui se brisent et des cris qui éclatent, Jacques se précipite, reconnaît sa femme parmi les victimes, l'enlève encore palpitante, et veut la délivrer de ses vêtements. Mais elle, d'une main pudique, repoussait les efforts de son mari, jusqu'à ce que, l'ayant portée dans un lieu retiré, il put la découvrir enfin. Sous les riches tissus qu'elle portait, il aperçut un cilice: au même instant, la mourante rendit le dernier soupir.*

*Cette mort soudaine, ces austères habitudes chez une personne nourrie dans toutes les délicatesses de l'opulence, la certitude enfin d'être le seul coupable des péchés expiés sous ce cilice, frappèrent le jurisconsulte de Todi comme d'un coup de foudre.<sup>1</sup>*

Because of this bereavement and the realization that his bride had worn 'the robe of sackcloth' as an act of reparation for his own sins, Giacomone devoted himself to religion, and in time entered the Franciscan order. He is remembered as the author of the *Stabat Mater*.

The sonnet expresses an attitude of mind well summed up in a sentence of Arnold's recorded in his note-book under date of January 29, 1854: '*Il avait de la gaieté dans l'esprit et de la mélancolie dans le cœur.*'

Arnold may have drawn the story from the magazine (with which his diary for 1864 shows him to have been acquainted), but more probably from Ozanam's book based on the articles in *Le Correspondant*. (See the commentary on

1 *Le Correspondant*, xxvii. 644; the 1852 edition of *Les Poètes franciscains en Italie au treizième siècle*, pp. 170-71.

'The Good Shepherd with the Kid,' *infra.*, p.146.) The source was first pointed out by Ernest H. Wilkins.<sup>1</sup>

#### A PICTURE AT NEWSTEAD

This was composed on Sunday, June 21, 1863. Arnold's note-books show no record of his visiting Newstead that year; but he had doubtless gone there during his inspection of schools in the region. Derby was often his headquarters; and his note-books show him at Nottingham, from which Newstead is easily reached.

The picture here described represents the first Earl of Arundel (1585-1646), and one of his grandsons, *not* his son. The boy is either Thomas Howard, or Henry Howard, afterwards sixth Duke of Norfolk. But neither of these persons was mentally unsound. The great Earl, however, is said to have had a grandson who was so; but proof of this is not easily come at.

The portrait, once at Newstead, is recorded by Lionel Cust in his catalogue of Van Dyck's paintings (*Sir Anthony Van Dyck*, London, 1900) as a genuine Van Dyck, a 'repetition' of the well-known portrait in the possession of the Duke of Norfolk, a reproduction of which may be found in Cust. The picture hung in the 'salon or large drawing room,' according to the guide-book of Richard Allen (*A Souvenir of Newstead Abbey*, 1874, p.25). Although this guide is of later date than the sonnet, it is no doubt derived from a still earlier book, of the kind usually put into the hands of visitors to such houses. It contains the statement

<sup>1</sup> In 'The Source of Arnold's Jacopone Sonnet,' *Modern Philology*, VOL. XXXI., November, 1933, pp.200-02.

that caused the poet to make one of his errors, for it refers to the painting as representing 'the Earl of Arundel and his Son.' We have been unable to determine the whereabouts of the picture today; it was not, apparently, among the contents of the Abbey which were disposed of at auction.

The story referred to in the sonnet may very well have been a local tradition, repeated by an attendant at the Abbey when Arnold visited it, and based on no more solid foundation than the fact that one of the Howard children was a lunatic. The child represented in the picture betrays no sign of any mental deficiency.

#### RACHEL

Rachel died January 3, 1858. Arnold's three sonnets appeared first among the *New Poems* of 1867, but are certainly of much earlier composition since we know one of them to have been written on June 28, 1863. They were reprinted regularly among the collected poems, but are not included in the *Selections*. In the volume of 1869, they were grouped among the Elegiac Poems.

In his essay, 'The French Play in London,' published in the *Nineteenth Century* for August, 1879, Arnold stated that he first saw Rachel at the Edinburgh Theatre as Hermione and that he 'followed her to Paris and for two months never missed one of her presentations.'<sup>1</sup> Mr. Alan Harris has shown that Arnold's memory was probably at fault after some thirty years, and that he probably first saw Rachel in July, 1846, in two London performances—one of

<sup>1</sup> See *Irish Essays*, 1882, p. 210.

them that of *Phèdre*. He then went to Paris on December 29, 1846, where that same night he watched her in *Polyeucte*. He left Paris on February 11, having attended the theatre practically every night.<sup>2</sup>

The essay on the French Play praises Rachel's high intellectual power, which he thinks far surpassed that of Sarah Bernhardt. 'She began almost where Mdlle. Sarah Bernhardt ends.'<sup>3</sup>

All the materials for the sonnets are found in Mme A. de Barréra's *Memoirs of Rachel*, 2 vols., London, 1858.

Rachel left Paris on September 15, 1857, for the south of France:

Although nothing required she should rise early, tormented by an anxious wish to see once more a spot associated with the most memorable events of her life, she was dressed long before the dawning of the tardy autumnal day. To those who remonstrated on her early rising she peremptorily replied she had a pilgrimage to perform before she left Paris, and that her family could meet, and take leave of her at the station.

From her residence in the Place Royale, which she was never to re-enter alive, she drove, passing by the Gymnase, to the Théâtre Français, and ordering the carriage to stop before it, remained long gazing at the house that had been the scene of her first *débûts* and of fifteen of the most brilliant years of her career. . . . A friend at last roused her from the meditations in which, regardless of the hour, she was indulging, and hurried her off. She leaned her head out of the window as long as the building remained in sight.<sup>4</sup>

2 See 'Matthew Arnold: The "Unknown Years,"' *The Nineteenth Century*, vol. cxiii, April, 1933, pp. 504-05. The diaries upon which Mr. Harris's deductions depend are now in the Yale Collection. They show that the London performances were on July 20 and 22, and that, during the later sojourn in Paris, Arnold saw Rachel at least ten times.

3 *Irish Essays*, p. 217.

4 Mme de Barréra, *Memoirs*, II. 304-05.

Mme Rachel retired to the villa of Sardou at Cannet, near Cannes. The dramatist had been a friend of David of Angers, and certain works by that sculptor decorated the room in which the dying actress lay: 'At the foot of the bed was a statue of the Grecian Polhymnia [*sic*], wearing on its marble features an expression of intense sadness.' <sup>5</sup>

An account of the Hebrew psalms sung at her death-bed, beginning, 'Ascend to God, daughter of Israel,' is given. <sup>6</sup> 'The public testimony the Rabbi's words afforded that the *tragédienne* had died in the faith of her people was probably introduced in his discourse on account of the reports circulated that in her heart at least, she was a Catholic, in corroboration of which it was asserted that during her last illness she had constantly worn on her bosom an image of the Virgin, and that so long as she had strength to read anything, her favourite book had been the "Imitation." ' <sup>7</sup>

The account of Rachel's birth at a 'little wretched inn in Munf, (Canton of Aran, Switzerland)' is also given. <sup>8</sup> Her father was a 'poor pedlar.'

### WORLDLY PLACE

In Arnold's note-book for 1863, under date of August 25, is found the sentence, 'A man can even live well in a palace. Long. 71,' set down as the subject-matter for a sonnet.

The book referred to is, *The Thoughts of the Emperor*

<sup>5</sup> Mme de Barréra, *Memoirs*, II.308.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, II.319.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, II.324.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, I.7.

*M. Aurelius Antoninus. Translated by George Long. London: Bell and Daldy, Fleet Street. 1862.* The passage which caught Arnold's attention reads,

Where a man can live, there he can also live well. But he must live in a palace; well then, he can also live well in a palace.

Arnold's essay on Marcus Aurelius (*Essays in Criticism*, 1865), with which this sonnet is intimately related, is a review of Long's translation, which is highly praised: 'Mr. Long's version of Marcus Aurelius being what it is, an Englishman who reads to live, and does not live to read, may henceforth let the Greek original repose upon its shelf.' This essay first appeared in the *Victoria Magazine*, for November, 1863.

#### EAST LONDON

The 'preacher' whom Arnold met was the Reverend William Tyler, D.D. (1812-90), pastor of the Congregational Church in Hanbury Street, Spitalfields. He gave the land for the Memorial Hall of the Christian Community in London Street, Bethnal Green, and founded the Bethnal Green Free Library, which is under the same roof. This identification is made certain by an article in the *Pall Mall Gazette* for December 1, 1884, giving an account of an address delivered by Arnold in London, in which he eulogized the Christian workers there, among them William Tyler—'Mr. Arnold met him once in Spitalfields and asked "Ill and overworked, how fare you in this scene?"'

*The Times* of December 1, 1884, gives a full report of the meeting of Saturday, November 29. A mosaic, exe-



cuted by Salviati after Watts's 'Time, Death, and Judgment,' was placed on the front of St. Jude's Church, Commercial Street, Whitechapel, by the friends of the Reverend S. A. Barnett, vicar of the parish, 'to record the institution of a yearly exhibition of pictures in Whitechapel.' Arnold, who had apparently been summoned by Watts, gave the principal address. He said, in part:

Some there are . . . who came to the East-end, though I did not—some from those classes who possess and enjoy and from the class that is aspiring to possess and enjoy. They, dissatisfied with merely living the life of those classes, came to the East-end, and such men are the true saviours of society. Their names pass, everything passes, but that matters little—their names are written in the Book of Life. . . . I cannot forbear to say that I myself knew, when I inspected schools here, one of those men—a man fruitful in good works, cheerful, devoted, indefatigable. That man I have never seen since, and I do not know whether he is alive or not; some here will perhaps know him by name—William Tyler.

Later Arnold significantly adds:

No doubt the social sympathies, the feeling for beauty, the pleasure of art, if left merely by themselves, if untouched by what is the deepest thing in human life—religion—are apt to become ineffectual and superficial.

An account of the work of Dr. Tyler is given in *The Story of the Christian Community, 1685-1909*, by Edward C. Rayner, London, [n.d.]. In this volume Arnold's sonnet is reprinted on the frontispiece representing Dr. Tyler.

In the summer of 1864 and again in 1865 East London was scourged by epidemics of cholera, which put a severe tax on all agencies of public relief.

## WEST LONDON

No account of this incident is preserved in the poet's diaries. A vaguely similar anecdote is found at the end of the twenty-ninth Letter of *Obermann*.

## EAST AND WEST

It is significant that Arnold's sonnet 'East and West' appeared in the same year with his essays *On the Study of Celtic Literature*, 1867. The source of the legend which Arnold here employs was revealed by Herbert Wright.<sup>1</sup> He gives the legend as follows:

Once a week Cybi and Seiriol used to meet in the middle of Anglesey at a place called Clorach near Llanerchymedd. At the present day two springs, some ten yards apart, still exist there. One of them bears the name of Ffynnon Seiriol, the other that of Ffynnon Gybi. . . . Seiriol, starting from Penmon towards Clorach, was travelling westwards and had the morning sun behind him. When returning home in the evening his face was once more turned from the sun. Hence in Welsh he is called *Seiriol wyn* or Seiriol the fair. Cybi, coming from Holyhead, faced the sun, and similarly on his homeward journey. In Welsh he is therefore styled *Cybi felyn* or Cybi the brown, that is, the sun-burnt. . . . An account of the legend is given by Robert Williams in his *Enwogion Cymru, A Biographical Dictionary of Eminent Welshmen* (1852).

It is possible that Arnold heard the story while he was on one of his holidays in North Wales. He was there in August, 1864. His indifference to the details of his source is explained by his desire to enforce the symbolism of the

<sup>1</sup> In the *Modern Language Review*, VOL. XIII., July, 1918, pp. 324-5.

last three lines of the sonnet, and will offend only the antiquarian.

### THE BETTER PART

This sonnet and that entitled 'Immortality' reveal Arnold's increasing interest in religious matters during the decade of the 'sixties. At this time his mind was pre-occupied with Vinet, Renan, Réville, Joubert, Vauvenargues, Bishop Wilson, Isaac Barrow, George Sand, and others from whom he drew such spiritual sustenance as their works afforded.

The first title, 'Anti-Desperation,' ugly as it is, was perhaps more appropriate to the thought conveyed by the sonnet than is 'The Better Part.' The poem was not included in the *Selections* of 1878.

### THE DIVINITY

The question at issue between Saint Bernard and Gilbert de la Porrée (Bishop of Poitiers) which was argued before the Pope, had to do with the nature of the Divine Essence. Arnold's acquaintance with this forgotten theological dispute was derived from James Cotter Morison's *The Life and Times of Saint Bernard, Abbot of Clairvaux*. London, 1863, p.465. The passage used by the poet is the following:

Bernard addressed him (Bishop Gilbert) . . . 'This scandal has had its origin in this one fact, that many are of opinion that you believe and teach that the Divine essence, or nature, or divinity, or wisdom, or goodness, or magnitude, is not God, but the form by which God is. If you believe this, acknowledge it openly, or else

deny it.' Gilbert, fatigued and confused by the long discussion, answered rather hastily: 'I do not. The form of God, the divinity by which God is, is not itself God.' 'Behold,' said Bernard, 'we have what we wanted. Let that confession be taken down in writing.' Pen and ink were then handed to Gilbert, who while in the act of writing, said to Bernard, 'You also write down that Divinity is God.' 'Write it,' replied Bernard, 'with a pen of iron, and with the point of a diamond; nay, grave it in the flinty rock, that the Divine essence, nature, form, deity, goodness, wisdom, virtue, power, magnitude, truly is God.'<sup>1</sup>

It may be doubted whether Saint Bernard or any other Catholic theologian would accept the paraphrase and amplification given by the poet as the sum of Christian doctrine. To Bernard the Deity was a person; to Arnold, an abstraction. But the proof of God's reality by an immediate sense of the presence and practice of God's qualities is the cornerstone of the poet's own faith. The sonnet might well serve as an epigraph for *Literature and Dogma*.

#### IMMORTALITY

See the commentary on 'The Better Part,' p.144. The thought of the sonnet is the constant one of Arnold's prose writings on religion—the reiteration that any true immortality begins the moment a man dies to the law of his ordinary self and rises to the law of his better self, with its own rewarding consciousness that righteousness partakes of life and not of death. 'If this experimental sense does not rise to be stronger in us, does not rise to the sense of being inextinguishable, that is probably because our experience of

<sup>1</sup> For a fuller account of the affair, see H. R. Patch, *The Tradition of Boethius*, 1935, pp.29-30; also R. L. Poole, *Illustrations of the History of Mediæval Thought*, 2nd ed., 1890, pp.112-15.

righteousness is really so very small; and here we may well permit ourselves to trust Jesus, whose practice and intuition both of them went, in these matters, so far deeper than ours. At any rate, we have in our experience this strong sense of *life from righteousness* to start with; capable of being developed, apparently, by progress in righteousness into something immeasurably stronger.<sup>1</sup>

Wyndham Slade has written on a slip of paper inserted in his own copy of *God and the Bible*: 'Mrs. Matthew Arnold (who never read her husband's religious books) used to say of him, "Matt is a good Christian at bottom."'

Mrs. Arnold and many other Christians perhaps felt, however, that Arnold's noble conception and its bracing morality took too little account of the infinite mercy of God and a touch of heavenly grace imperfectly understood by moralists. They may have even smiled with unchristian malice at the unfortunate *double entendre* of the fourth word in the last line of the sonnet:

Mounts, and that hardly, to eternal life.

### THE GOOD SHEPHERD WITH THE KID

This sonnet was composed on Sunday, November 27, 1864. It is derived from the first foot-note to page 20 of A.-F. Ozanam's *Les Poètes franciscains en Italie au treizième siècle* (Paris, 1852), which Arnold was reading at the time.

*Les peintures des catacombes représentent quelquefois le Bon Pasteur chargé, non d'une brebis, mais d'un chevreau. Les archéologues considèrent cette image comme une imitation servile de l'art païen, qui peignit*

1 *Literature and Dogma*, pp.377-8.

*Apollon en habit de berger, gardant les troupeaux d'Admète, et chargeant un chevreau sur ses épaules. On peut donner à ce symbole un sens plus théologique et plus vrai, en se reportant aux controverses contemporaines. Lorsqu'au second siècle, la secte des Montanistes refusait à l'Église le droit de remettre les péchés commis après le baptême, les catholiques leur opposaient l'exemple du Bon Pasteur rapportant la brebis égarée. Mais Tertullien, qui venait de mettre sa fougueuse parole au service de l'hérésie, reprochait aux catholiques de profaner cette parabole, de la peindre jusque sur les coupes de leurs banquets. «Le Christ, disait-il, ne sauve que la brebis, il est sans pitié pour les boucs.» (De Pudicit., cap. 7, 10, 13.) L'Église répondit à cette doctrine désespérante en mettant un chevreau sur les épaules du Pasteur éternel. Pour que personne ne s'y méprenne, S. Éucher, au cinquième siècle, expliquant les règles du symbolisme chrétien, déclare que les brebis figurent les justes, et les chevreaux les pécheurs. (Liber formularum spiritualis intelligentiæ.)*

From Ozanam Arnold also took the story which is the source of the sonnet, 'Austerity of Poetry.'

### MONICA'S LAST PRAYER

Arnold himself in a note calls attention to the source of this sonnet, St. Augustine's *Confessions*, book IX, chapter XI.

*Aspexit astantes me et fratrem meum et ait nobis quasi quaerenti similis: 'Ubi eram?' Deinde nos intuens maerore attonitos: 'Ponitis hic,' inquit 'matrem vestram.' Ego silebam et fletum frenabam. Frater autem meus quiddam locutus est, quo eam non in peregre, sed in patria defungi tamquam felicius optaret. Quo audito illa vultu anxio, reverberans eum oculis, quod talia saperet, atque inde me intuens: 'Vide,' ait, 'quid dicit.' Et mox ambobus: 'Ponite,' inquit, 'hoc corpus ubicumque: nihil vos eius cura conturbet; tantum illud vos rogo, ut ad domum altare memineritis mei, ubiubi fueritis.' Cumque hanc sententiam verbis quibus poterat explicasset, conticuit et ingravescente morbo exercebatur.*

The poem expresses Arnold's reiterated belief that the essential spirit of religion can be kept, even in a time when

Creeds pass, rites change, no altar standeth whole.

It reflects, moreover, his constant interest in the Church Fathers. He praised the Abbé Migne's great collection, a work which 'embraces the whole range of human interests; like one of the great Middle-Age Cathedrals, it is in itself a study for a life.' And again: 'Catholicism suggests,—what shall I say?—all the pell-mell of the men and women of Shakspeare's plays.'<sup>1</sup>

1 'Pagan and Mediæval Religious Sentiment,' *Essays in Criticism*, First Series, p.189.

## LYRIC POEMS





## SWITZERLAND

THE title 'Switzerland' as applied to a group of lyrics was first used by Arnold in the edition of 1853. The series there consists of six poems:

1. To my Friends, who ridiculed a Tender Leave-Taking.
2. The Lake. [*Later entitled Meeting.*]
3. A Dream.
4. Parting.
5. To Marguerite. ('Yes: in the sea of life enisl'd.')
6. Absence.

Only one of these, 'A Dream,' was there printed for the first time. The first, 'To my Friends,' had appeared in 1849; the rest, ungrouped, were in the volume of 1852.

In 1854 the series was increased to seven, by the addition (as the fifth in order) of 'A Farewell,' a poem which had appeared independently in the volume of 1852.

In 1857, in the so-called third edition of the poems, the number of poems constituting 'Switzerland' was increased to eight by the addition of the lyric beginning, 'We were apart: yet day by day,' to which the title 'To Marguerite' was now given. The poem (number 5 in the list above) 'Yes: in the sea of life enisl'd' was now entitled 'Isolation,' though in 1852 it had been called 'To Marguerite, in returning a Volume of the Letters of Ortis.' The series was now as follows:

1. To my Friends.
2. The Lake.
3. A Dream.
4. Parting.

5. A Farewell.
6. To Marguerite. ('We were apart: yet day by day.')
7. Isolation. (Yes: in the sea of life enis!d.)
8. Absence.

In 1869 the series was again altered, this time by the excision of 'A Dream,' and the addition, as number 8, of 'The Terrace at Berne,' which Arnold had published two years before in the *New Poems* of 1867. Here, too, the title of the first poem was altered to 'A Memory-Picture.' [In 1877, this poem was excluded from the series,<sup>1</sup> thus reducing the number of the component lyrics to seven, but it was accorded a place among the Early Poems.] The series was still further complicated in the edition of 1869 by the interchange of titles between the two poems dealing with the theme of spiritual isolation. The first of these, beginning, 'We were apart: yet day by day' was now entitled, 'Isolation. To Marguerite'; and the second, 'Yes! in the sea of life enisled,' became 'To Marguerite. Continued.' The confusion caused by this change has bewildered readers ever since.

From this time on, the series remained unaltered, though the poem which had been discarded, 'A Dream,' was revived and reprinted as one of the Early Poems in 1881. Arnold's frequent reconsideration of the content and order of the series suggests that references to Marguerite may be found elsewhere than in the 'Switzerland' group.

Professor Hale<sup>2</sup> would, for example, identify twenty-one poems as dealing with the Marguerite motif. To those that

1 The series there begins with 'Meeting,' which till 1869 had been entitled 'The Lake.'

2 E. E. Hale, Jr., *Select Poems of Matthew Arnold*, Boston and London, 1908, pp. 199-202.

form the series, he would add: 'Urania' (originally 'Excuse'), 'Euphrosyne' (originally 'Indifference'), 'Destiny,' 'Human Life,' 'Despondency,' 'Youth's Agitations,' 'Self-Deception,' and the whole group known as 'Faded Leaves.' All these were printed in the volume of 1852, and, with the exception of 'Faded Leaves,' may not unreasonably be thought of as a product of the same lyric impulse that produced the series.

For a discussion of the 'Faded Leaves' group and for some new biographical material which illuminates not only that series, but also the story of Marguerite, see below, pp.168ff.

#### MARGUERITE

That Marguerite was an actual person seems to be definitely proved by the letters from the Baths of Leuk (September 29, 1848) and from Thun (September 23, 1849) which Arnold addressed to Clough.<sup>1</sup> In the first he writes: 'Tomorrow I repass the Gemmi and get to Thun: linger one day at the Hôtel Bellevue for the sake of the blue eyes of one of its inmates: and then proceed by slow stages down the Rhine. . . .' He is in a turbulent state of mind, listening at one moment to his guide's account of the 'superbes filles' in Domo d'Ossola, and at another turning to Epictetus. Of the latter he can make but little use 'when tired,' and recalls the cynicism of Horace and the Epicureanism of Béranger. He is glad to dispense for ever with certain authors—and with certain women; thereafter he quotes some youthful verses of his

1 *Letters to Clough*, pp.91-3;109-11.

own in which he has attempted to repel the thought of female charm.

A year later he is back in Thun, and once more the poetical impulse and the emotional stress are strong within him. He quotes from his own as yet unpublished 'Stanzas in Memory of Obermann'; and sends Clough certain lines addressed, in a highly Byronic mood, to the tempestuous Alps. These lines were later incorporated in the lyric entitled 'Parting,' which is addressed to Marguerite.

Moreover, he tells his friend of a romantic struggle to 'master' himself: 'I can go thro: the imaginary process of mastering myself and see the whole affair as it would then stand, but at the critical point I am too apt to hoist up the mainsail to the wind, and let her drive . . . I am here in a curious and not altogether comfortable state: however tomorrow I carry my aching head to the mountains and to my cousin, the Blümlis Alp.' (The verses follow.) He adds, 'Yes, I come, but in three or four days I shall be back here, and then I must try how soon I can ferociously turn towards England . . .'

Further information about Marguerite—her name, her friends, Martin and Olivia, her connexion with the Bellevue Hotel, and her home in Paris—is lacking. Some few details of appearance and manner are to be found in the lyrics themselves; but this is really all that is now known.<sup>2</sup> Until the publication of Arnold's letters to Clough in the winter of 1932, it had often been assumed that the whole affair and all the poems springing out of it were imaginary.

In May 1933, the present editors made some unavailing

<sup>2</sup> Mrs. Sells in her *Matthew Arnold and France*, Cambridge, 1935 (chapters VII, VIII, and IX) has given an imaginative interpretation of the incidents.

searches in and about Thun for material regarding Marguerite which might survive. The register of the Hotel Bellevue for 1848 and 1849 has been destroyed. The old proprietress, whose memory retained many early legends of the place, died in 1932. A much more likely register—that of Thun Castle, visited by many pairs of lovers in its time—is also gone. There is no record of foreign visitors anywhere in the region; even the tombstones in the churchyard, which looks down upon the Aar, bear no arresting names. For Arnold's readers Marguerite may, therefore, be destined to remain what in truth she became to the poet himself—the animating figure in a dream.

But if the emotions set forth in the quotations above be not those of the 'Switzerland' series, how are they to be explained? The year that has passed but has not altered Marguerite is the year that intervenes between the two letters just quoted. The blue eyes of 'Parting' are surely the same blue eyes for a sight of which the poet went to Thun. In all which there need be nothing to disturb the reader. Acquaintance with Arnold's method of composition inevitably leads the student to inquire after sources and the facts which lie at the root of the poems, for it was not Arnold's way to dispense with facts as a point of departure, however much purely imaginary material might be added later. We believe, then, that the 'Switzerland' poems had their inception in certain definite events of the years 1848-9; that in the course of their creation they were altered and freely idealized according to the mood of the poet. No more than this, the natural process by which poetry comes into being, is perhaps needed to account for the poet's assertion to his daughters that the

experience related was imaginary. It was, no doubt, somewhat similar to the 'imaginary process' of mastering himself, which was enacted in the theatre of his own mind. There is no necessity of relating every incident and every emotion in the poems to actual events.

Arnold's attitude towards such a matter may be found in his essay on 'Dante and Beatrice,' in which he defends the view that Beatrice, though a real person, must also be interpreted as a spiritual influence. 'Art requires a basis of fact, but it also desires to treat this basis of fact with the utmost freedom; and this desire for the freest handling of its object is even thwarted when the object is too near, and too real. To have had his [Dante's] relations with Beatrice more positive, intimate, and prolonged, to have had an affection for her into which there entered more of the life of this world, would have even somewhat impeded, one may say, Dante's free use of these relations for the purpose of art.' <sup>3</sup>

Professor Whitridge has remarked to us that the 'unplumb'd, salt, estranging sea' of the fifth lyric may be a reminiscence of Horace's '*Oceano dissociabili*' (*Odes*, I.iii. 22). And there may be, too, an echo of Coleridge's 'Christabel,' with its account of the youthful friends, Lord Roland and Sir Leoline, painfully separated by false rumours:

They stood aloof, the scars remaining,  
Like cliffs which had been rent asunder;  
A dreary sea now flows between.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>3</sup> *Fraser's Magazine*, VOL.LXVII, May, 1863, p.666. *Essays in Criticism*, Third Series, p.93. We are indebted to Miss Sophia Fry for this interesting observation.

<sup>4</sup> The comparison was noted by J. D. Coleridge, review in the *Christian Remembrancer*, VOL.XXVII, April, 1854, p.314.

If Marguerite herself, however, be a vision, Thun certainly is not. The poems are true to their setting, and reflect the scene of mountain, lake, and town in a detail so vivid that the very fidelity of the description seems to be that of a 'memory-picture,' heightened by the engraving power of some strong personal emotion. Old prints still hanging in the hotel increase this impression, since they show landmarks now gone, such as 'the roof'd bridge that spans the stream.' The lawn in front of the hotel once extended to the very edge of the Aar—'where 'neath the garden wall it hums.' Ash and poplar trees abound in the region of the 'blue twin-lakes,' into one of which the river flows just beyond the Bellevue; and the great mountains rise in the distance to form the cold grandeur of the Oberland. Though the background is more imposing and gigantic, the quieter parts of Thun and the district along the lake and the river are not without a suggestion of Amble-side and Arnold's own English home. In this place, reminiscent of his boyhood and now eloquent with the language of Senancour, he experiences a moving and romantic passion. Forms and images long existent in his mind and memory are summoned into life by this new and yet familiar world of lakes and streams and hills, as well as by that love which Senancour himself had called '*un bel accident de la vie.*'

### The Terrace at Berne

This poem, a pendant to the earlier 'Marguerite' group, was composed, as Arnold indicated, ten years after the preceding, and published for the first time in 1869. (Entries in



the note-book for April, May, and June of 1863, carrying the exhortation to finish 'Marguerite,' imply that the final draft was long delayed. It seems to have been finished by June 14th of that year.) Arnold went to Berne with his wife on June 29, 1859, during his tour of the Continent on behalf of the Education Office. He spent June 30th there, the 'weather clearing,' and 'drove in the evening.' On July 1 he left for Geneva.<sup>1</sup> There is no record of an excursion to Thun or 'the blue twin-lakes.' The old haunts of Marguerite were recollected only from afar, if not altogether in tranquillity.

The twelfth stanza, characteristic of Arnold's attitude during the entire incident here recorded, was altered by him, ten years later, February, 1879, to read,

Like ships that meet and speak and pass  
Upon the boundless Ocean plain,  
So on the sea of life, alas,  
Man meets man—meets, and quits again.

The small piece of paper on which these lines are written is among the Yale Papers.<sup>2</sup> It may have been written down for a collection of autographs, though of this there is no evidence. The stanza was never printed in the form given above. Perhaps by the time that 'The Terrace at Berne' was reprinted for the next edition (1881) Arnold had become aware of his unconscious use of the verses in Longfellow's *Aftermath*, published in 1873. They are part of the Theologian's Tale of 'Elizabeth' (a poem added to *The Tales of a Wayside Inn*), and read,

1 These details of the 1859 journey are taken from a MS. diary in the possession of A. Edward Newton.

2 The gift of Francis J. Glasheen.

Ships that pass in the night, and speak each other in passing,  
Only a signal shown and a distant voice in the darkness;  
So on the ocean of life we pass and speak one another,  
Only a look and a voice, then darkness again and a silence.

The metaphor of ships parted at sea is brilliantly used by Clough in '*Qua Cursum Ventus*,' a poem written at Oxford, probably in 1845, and of course familiar to Arnold.

Both passages quoted seem to be derived from a not wholly clear figure in Emerson's 'Lecture on the Times' (delivered in December, 1841):

To what port are we bound? Who knows! There is no one to tell us but such poor weather-tossed mariners as ourselves, whom we speak as we pass, or who have hoisted some signal . . .

Emerson's 'Lecture on the Times' was printed in London in the year 1844,<sup>3</sup> at the very time when, as Arnold later announced, Emerson's was one of the 'voices' heard at Oxford.

### THE STRAYED REVELLER

'The Strayed Reveller' gave its title to Arnold's first volume of verse (1849); it was reprinted in every collected edition with practically no alteration of the text. As early as 1855 it was the subject of a parody, 'The Strayed Sight-seer, by M.A.,' in *Crystals from Sydenham, or what modern authors say of the [Crystal] Palace*, edited by 'Cygnus.'

The descriptions of the Orient are derived in large part from Captain Sir Alexander Burnes's *Travels into Bokhara*,

<sup>3</sup> *Nature, an Essay, and Lectures on the Times*. London, Henry C. Clarke & Co., 1844. The book was reprinted in 1845.

1834, as are similar passages in 'Sohrab and Rustum,' and 'The Sick King in Bokhara.' Arnold, who may have remembered the beautiful reference to the Oxus in Shelley's *Alastor* (ll.142-3), found an account of 'the broad, clay-laden, lone, Chorasman stream,' in the second volume of Burnes's work (pp.5,7), which also mentions the terror of the merchants while upon the river. The strange method of crossing it had been described in the preceding volume.

The mode in which we passed the Oxus was singular, and, I believe, quite peculiar to this part of the country. We were drawn by a pair of horses, who were yoked to the boat, on each bow, by a rope fixed to the hair of the mane. The bridle is then put on as if the horse were to be mounted; the boat is pushed into the stream, and, without any other assistance than the horses, is ferried directly across the most rapid channel. A man on board holds the reins of each horse, and allows them to play loosely in the mouth, urging him to swim; and, thus guided, he advances without difficulty. There is not an oar to aid in impelling the boat; and the only assistance from those on board consists in manœuvring a rude rounded pole at the stern, to prevent the vessel from wheeling in the current, and to give both horses clear water to swim.<sup>1</sup>

In the same volume he found an account of the floating melon-beds of Cashmeer:

In the valley of Cashmeer there are moveable beds of melons, which in some degree, may be considered in the light of islands. The ingenious people of that valley spread a thick mat on the surface of their lake, and sprinkle it over with soil: it soon acquires a consistency, from the grass growing upon it. On the following year they sow melons and cucumbers, and reap the harvest from a boat; and thus turn to account the very surface of the lake in their rich country.<sup>2</sup>

1 Burnes, *Travels into Bokhara*, 1.249-50.

2 *Ibid.*, 1.60.

It is significant that the above passage occurs immediately after Burnes's account of the 'floating islets' of Ruwaesir, in the hill district of Mundee on the Sutlege.

Some of the details relating to the Bacchanalian revels may have been derived from *The Bacchanals* of Euripides.

This symbolic poem seems to suggest a similarity between the intoxication of the Bacchic revellers in their ecstasy and the experience of poets in the act of creation. From the latter the gods demand a suffering proportioned to the knowledge of active life, communicated to poets by them in visions. The young reveller, who has paid neither the price that Circe receives for her cup nor that which the gods exact for song, but who is under the immediate protection and inspiration of Dionysus, is contrasted with Ulysses, the much-enduring man, the type of active experience, somewhat as Callicles, in the later dramatic poem was to be set over against the philosopher Empedocles. See also the commentary on 'Resignation,' p.67.

#### FRAGMENT OF AN "ANTIGONE"

This is from Arnold's first volume of 1849. It was reprinted in 1855, and given a place in the collected edition of 1869. The notes were added in 1869, and remained unchanged, as did the text.

It is improbable that the poet had any intention at this time of writing a Greek tragedy in English or of challenging comparison with Sophocles by selecting Antigone as a heroine; nevertheless this poem and the following one afford clear evidence of the inspiration of the austere ethical poetry of the Greek choruses. The selection of this

type of lyric also enabled him to lay under contribution the beautiful details of Greek mythology, as he was to do not only here (in the stanzas dealing with the Dawn-Goddess and the Hunter of the Tanagræan Field), but in the lyrics of 'Empedocles on Etna' and in 'Philomela' ('lone Daulis and the high Cephissian vale').

How far such poems are directly indebted to the inspiration of the poet's studies at Rugby and Oxford it is now difficult to say.

The 'Antigone' fragment, with its discussion of the law of the family as opposed to selfish hedonism, recalls Sophocles' own treatment of the claim of blood against the claims of the state; and the last part of the fragment, with its debt to the *Trachiniæ*, suggests that the fragment of a 'Dejaneira' was composed about the same time as this.

#### FRAGMENT OF CHORUS OF A "DEJANEIRA"

This poem, probably, like the preceding, a product of the poet's youth, was not printed till 1867. The text remained unchanged through the collected editions, in which it regularly appeared.

The title is appropriate, for the wisdom of the poem is akin to that which the noble and tender Dejaneira of Sophocles' *Trachiniæ* had learned all too well from her life with Heracles—the anxieties and the disappointments of those who remain loyal to wandering mortal men and their wild destinies. Arnold's references to the oracles, and the 'enquirer's holy robe'—in contrast to the Nessus shirt of Heracles—are also fitting for a chorus to a play in which the reflective, high-souled Dejaneira might be the central fig-

ure. In the *Trachiniæ* Sophocles faintly suggests the closing stanza of Arnold in his warning against a hopeful trust in tomorrow before today is safely past (ll.943ff.) and in the very opening words of *Dejaneira* (ll.1-3), which repeat the old saying that a mortal's fortune in life cannot be called good or evil before he dies.

Swinburne highly praised the first stanza of the poem and hoped to see more of the tragedy in time. 'That must be a noble statue,' he wrote, 'which could match this massive fragment.'<sup>1</sup>

The last stanza is referred to by Arnold in a letter to his mother (February 18, 1872) as expressive of his feelings on the death of his son, Trevenen William.

#### EARLY DEATH AND FAME

These lines were originally part of 'Haworth Churchyard' (see p. 236) and appeared in that portion of the poem in memory of Charlotte Brontë. The elegy was discarded by the poet (see p.231) until 1877, when it was first admitted to the collected poems, but in much altered form. Meanwhile the lines were given independent existence, under this title, in the *New Poems* of 1867: they were never restored to 'Haworth Churchyard.'

The connexion of the theme with that of the preceding poem is obvious.

#### PHILOMELA

'Philomela' was first printed in the volume of 1853, and reappeared regularly thereafter, save that it was, strangely

<sup>1</sup> *Essays and Studies*, London, 1875, p.160. For Saintsbury's adverse criticism and his very poor burlesque of the poem, see his *Matthew Arnold*, London, 1899, p.113.

enough, not included in the *Selections*. We do not know what discouraged the poet from placing 'Philomela' in the anthology of 1878; but he had apparently been troubled in choosing a final form for what has proved a very popular lyric. Arnold follows the Latin rather than the Greek version of the legend, which makes Procne the nightingale and Philomela the swallow.

Professor Garrod, in his admirable lecture on 'The Nightingale in Poetry,' points out that Simonides' calling the nightingale 'green-throated' was no more absurd than Arnold's 'tawny-throated'—the first draft is 'inken throated,' as below.<sup>1</sup> Professor Garrod, complaining that 'with the classical Renaissance the mythological Philomela [i.e., the mournful one] drove out nature,' and preferring the truer 'merry Nightingale' of the Chaucerians, regrets that Arnold 'brought the Nightingale back into her mythological connexions'—in spite of the poem's 'individual elegance of melancholy.'

The first draft of the poem is written on the fly-leaf of a copy of Latham's *English Language*, London, 1848, in the possession of the Reverend Roger Wodehouse.

Hark ah the nightingale  
 The inken throated—  
 Hast thou not yet, poor bird  
 Been help'd by slipping years  
 At least to half forgetfulness  
 Of that old pain.  
 Can change of scene, and night,

1 See *The Profession of Poetry and Other Lectures*, Oxford, 1929, pp. 135, 144, 158. Professor Garrod supposes that Arnold was 'misled by Aristophanes, who in the *Birds* (212-14) speaks of the Nightingale pouring her complaint *ἱεροῖς μέλεσιν γένυος ξουθῆς*. But *γένυος* means there, not *throat*, but *bill*. Elsewhere in the same play (744) all the birds are credited with a *γένυος ξουθῆς*.'





## URANIA

In 1852 and 1855 the title of this poem was 'Excuse.' It is evidently a product of the same emotions which produced the group of poems entitled 'Switzerland,' as the position which it occupies in the volume of 1852 plainly indicates.

'Urania'—which designates not merely the Muse of Astronomy, but also the 'Aphrodite of ideal love'—was a name befitting the celestial creature here described.

## EUPHROSYNE

This poem and 'Urania' have been, from their first appearance in 1852, companion-pieces. In that edition and in the volume of 1855 'Euphrosyne' was entitled 'Indifference.' Arnold's constant alteration of the text probably betrays his feeling that the poem did not reach his usual level.

## CALAIS SANDS

The first draft of the poem, apparently sent in a letter to Miss Wightman, is in the possession of Professor Arnold Whitridge, grandson of the poet. In the manuscript the verses have the heading, 'By the seaside near Calais. August. 1850.'

The poem was not published till the *New Poems* of 1867. It was there placed next to 'Dover Beach' because of the similarity of title, but the two were soon (1877) separated, probably because their juxtaposition seemed to imply a similarity of theme which the lyrics did not exhibit. In 1877 'Calais Sands' preceded the series called 'Faded

Leaves,' poems also referring to Miss Wightman, and this position was the final one.

It is believed by the family that Arnold secretly followed Miss Wightman and her father on their trip to the Continent in 1850. Justice Wightman, not sure that Arnold was able to support a wife, had forbidden any further meeting of the two. His actual consent to the marriage was not given until March 31, 1851. Arnold's diary for the early weeks of that year reflects his troubled and anxious spirit.<sup>1</sup> In the light of these facts the explanation of lines 25-32 is clear,

I must not spring to grasp thy hand,  
To woo thy smile, to seek thine eye;  
But I may stand far off, and gaze,  
And watch thee pass unconscious by . . .

But the meaning of the last two lines is less certain,

To-night those soft-fringed eyes shall close  
Beneath one roof, my queen! with mine.

They may require nothing more than the rather prosaic explanation that he and the Wightmans were to stay at the same hotel. This was probably Dessin's at Calais, where Arnold and his wife put up seven years later.<sup>2</sup>

### FADED LEAVES

Arnold arranged the five poems which constitute this series in their present order in 1855; all but one of them,

1 Alan Harris, 'Matthew Arnold: "The Unknown Years,"' *The Nineteenth Century*, VOL. CXIII, April, 1933, p. 509; also MS. diary for 1851, now in possession of Professor Whitridge.

2 Diary for 1859 in the possession of A. Edward Newton.

'Separation,' had appeared in the volume of 1852. Two of them exist in manuscript, a facsimile of which was published by Professor Whitridge in 1923.<sup>1</sup> The two poems in this manuscript are quite distinct, 'Longing' and 'Too Late.'

In sharp contrast to the similar series called 'Switzerland,' 'Faded Leaves' was left by the poet as he first constructed it, and the text was unaltered. It was not reprinted in the *Selections* of 1878.

Mrs. Sells follows Professor Hale in regarding all the poems as referring to Marguerite,<sup>2</sup> but the members of the Arnold family have always been confident that these poems, like 'Calais Sands,' were inspired by the poet's passion for Miss Wightman, and three of the poems, in manuscript form, are still in the possession of the family. Some have found this theory not altogether easy to accept, since a few of the utterances seem inconsistent with the poet's happy relations with the lady of his choice; but the existence of manuscripts originally in her possession makes the belief less difficult, and the poet's attitude to the lady with the 'grey eyes and the lovely brown hair' is quite different from that to Marguerite. Moreover, in an analysis of the melancholy strain, we must not fail to take account of difficulties in the courtship. Wyndham Slade writes of Arnold as quoting from 'Faded Leaves' as early as 1849; it may well be that some of the lines and fragments composed during the period of the 'Switzerland' group were incorporated into poems completed for Miss Wightman. Or Slade may have erred in the date.

<sup>1</sup> *Unpublished Letters of Matthew Arnold*, facing p.16.

<sup>2</sup> *Matthew Arnold and France*, pp.132-3.

There is, among Arnold's manuscript letters to Slade, one of supreme importance in its bearing upon both groups of poems and upon Arnold's personal history. It is here printed for the first time:

London  
Wednesday

My dear Slade

Last night for the 5<sup>th</sup> time the deities interposed: I was asked specially to meet the young lady—my wheels burned the pavement—I mounted the stairs like a wounded quaggha, the pulsations of my heart shook all Park Crescent—my eyes devoured every countenance in the room in a moment of time: she was at the opera, and could not come. At the last moment her mother had had tickets sent her, and sent a note of excuse.

I suffer from great dejection and lassitude this morning—having shown a Spartan fortitude on hearing the news last evening.

That I shall go abroad is not doubtful to me—I confess however, my love, that Spain is a little so. I find that they want me at once the 14<sup>th</sup> or 15<sup>th</sup> of October: now the *whole* of that month is wanted for Spain, September being still too hot. Then it is very expensive: young Wolff was told to take £100 for eight weeks—and has done so—then a whole herd of people is going there. Then we neither of us know the language so well as we shall next year, or should—in fact we know it quite too imperfectly for real amusement with the natives. Also next year there is an Oriel election in Easter week: therefore I shall then go there & have the autumn free.

However let nothing hinder our going somewhere together—the Pyrenees—or Savoy and the Italian lakes which I confess I should prefer—but I put myself in your hands.

Let me have a line to say when you come.

£60 or £70 is about the figure I am desirous my foreign expenditure should this year mount to.

How strange about die unerreichbare schöne! To have met her to have found something abstossend, and to have been freed from all disquietude on her account, voilà comment je comprends a mat-

ter of this kind. But all the oppositiveness & wilfulness in the human breast is agaçée by a succession of these perverse disappointments. farewell. denke mein

M. Arnold.

Mr. Slade has noted on the letter: 'the unerreichbare schöne was the lady who afterwards became his wife.' The date of the letter is most certainly the late spring or summer of 1850,<sup>3</sup> the year in which Arnold is said by his family to have first courted Miss Wightman. The family tradition is substantiated—and the letter is really dated—by Clough's letter to Thomas Arnold, July 23, 1850: 'Matt comes to Switzerland in a month; after your sister's wedding. He is deep in a flirtation with Miss Wightman, daughter of the Judge. It is thought it will come to something, for he has actually been to Church to meet her.'<sup>4</sup> There is a temptation to think at once of the opening lines of 'Absence,' the sixth poem of 'Switzerland':

In this fair stranger's eyes of grey  
Thine eyes, my love! I see.  
I shiver; for the passing day  
Had borne me far from thee.

Is this a record of Arnold's first sight of Miss Wightman, the grey-eyed 'stranger'? At the time when calm has been restored and Marguerite is a fading agitation, he again feels the old emotion and fears lest he 'go through the sad probation all again.' He is even driven back for a sharp moment

3 The Oriel elections came regularly during this period on the Friday after Easter. During his secretaryship to Lord Lansdowne, Arnold, of course, retained his status as a fellow of Oriel.

4 We print the text by the kindness of Miss Dorothy Ward. Mr. Harris refers to the letter (*The Nineteenth Century*, cxiii.508).

of dependence on a vision of Marguerite herself, as he deplores what he perhaps best expressed about the same time in 'Tristram'—the fit of passion which

subdues our souls to it,  
Till for its sake alone we live and move—  
Call it ambition, or remorse, or love.

For all his high spirits in the account to Slade, he hardly obscures his old worry over 'the limitation of life by the sentiment of love.' Too conscious already of his own divided nature, he shuns this new distraction which recalls too well the old one. He goes on:

This is the curse of life! that not  
A nobler, calmer train  
Of wiser thoughts and feeling blot  
Our passions from our brain;

But each day brings its petty dust  
Our soon-choked souls to fill,  
And we forget because we must  
And not because we will.

This point must not be pressed, the chronology being as uncertain as it is and 'fair strangers' with grey eyes not rare in the world.

The chief value of the letter, however, lies in the clear evidence it provides of the poet's keen excitement over Frances Wightman. The writer of this letter is surely not the Arnold of certain romantic accounts of him which set forth a creature dwindled and marred for ever by his separation from Marguerite, a man who, cold and dejected, turned his attention to the inspection of schools and the

writing of endless essays on politics and theology. Miss Wightman, like the woman whom she eclipsed, stirred in her lover a lyric ardour, and the result was 'Faded Leaves.'

The fourth poem of this group, 'On the Rhine,' with its reference to the 'high Alps, to which I go,' does not link the poems, as many readers are naturally tempted to think it must do, with the story of Marguerite. Arnold visited the Continent again in 1850, though the incidents of that journey are but meagrely preserved. Mr. Harris says that the matter is really settled 'by Tom's statement that one of [the poems], *On the Rhine*, records a "counterblast" in his [M.A.'s] relations with Miss Wightman which drove him out of England and towards the Alps.'<sup>5</sup> The lyric was written, it seems, on the river Rhine, to which the poet describes himself, at the end of 'Calais Sands,' as about to go. The latter poem, indubitably addressed to Miss Wightman, is dated in the manuscript, 'August, 1850,' thus affording strong evidence of the composition of 'Faded Leaves' at a later date than the 'Switzerland' group, and of a subject which, though similar, is quite distinct. Moreover, at the end of 'Separation,' the third poem of 'Faded Leaves,' the poet looks forward to a time when by accident, but presumably in company, he will again meet his beloved. He could not so hope to meet Marguerite.

#### DESPONDENCY

'Despondency,' a poem included in the volume of 1852, was discarded until 1855, when it was salvaged for *Poems*, Second Series.

<sup>5</sup> *The Nineteenth Century*, CXLIII. 508.

SELF-DECEPTION

First printed in 1852; revived, in 1855. The poem extends the thought set forth, less fully, in 'Despondency.'

The Platonic reminiscences in Arnold's thought should not obscure its direct, personal application. This lyric is but one of the many supplications the poet made for some *magister vitae*. In 1849 he had written to Clough that his 'one natural craving is not for profound thoughts, mighty spiritual workings etc. etc. but a distinct seeing of my way as far as my own nature is concerned.'<sup>1</sup>

DOVER BEACH

'Dover Beach' was first printed in the *New Poems* of 1867 and regularly reprinted thereafter; but it was probably composed much earlier. A draft of the first twenty-eight lines of the poem was in the library of the late Thomas J. Wise, who kindly permitted us to make use of it. It is pencilled on the back of a folded sheet of paper containing notes on the career of Empedocles (cf. pp.289-90). The lines have been so rubbed as to be almost illegible; indeed, it is even possible that an effort was made to erase them after they had been copied. By careful study, however, most of the writing can be made out.

The sea is calm tonight  
 The tide is full the moon lies fair  
                                 on the French coast  
 Upon the Strait: [*cancellation*] the light  
 Shines & is gone: the cliffs of England

1 *Letters to Clough*, p.110.



## POETRY OF MATTHEW ARNOLD

Glimmering & vast: out in the tranquil bay

Come to the window: hush'd is the night air.  
sweet

Only from the long line of spray  
 Where the sea meets the moon-blanch'd sand  
 Listen you hear the grating roar  
 Of pebbles which the waves suck back & fling

At their return, up the steep strand  
barr'd

Cease and begin and then again begin

With regular cadence slow, mournful and bring  
 The eternal note of sadness in.

Sophocles long ago  
 Heard it on the Ægean, and it brought

Into his mind the troubled ebb and flow  
turbid  
 Of human misery: we  
 Find also in the sound a thought  
 Hearing it by this distant northern sea:

The Sea of Faith

Was once too at the full and round earth's shore

Lay like the folds of a bright garment furl'd  
girdle

I  
 But now we only hear  
 Its melancholy long withdrawing roar  
 Retreating to the breath  
 Of the night wind down the vast edges drear  
 And naked shingles of the world. Ah love &c

This final paragraph, which is written at the side of the sheet, is the most important thing about this draft. The concluding words, 'Ah love &c.' seem to indicate that the last nine lines of the poem as we know it were already in existence when the portion regarding the ebb and flow

of the sea at Dover was composed. In other words, the draft of the poem here given was written as a prelude to the concluding paragraph of the lyric as finally published. It has probably struck readers that in that paragraph there is no reference to the sea or the tides:

Ah, love, let us be true  
To one another! for the world, which seems  
To lie before us like a land of dreams,  
So various, so beautiful, so new,  
Hath really neither joy, nor love, nor light,  
Nor certitude, nor peace, nor help for pain;  
And we are here as on a darkling plain  
Swept with confused alarms of struggle and flight,  
Where ignorant armies clash by night.

This famous simile in the concluding paragraph, descriptive of armies engaged in dubious conflict by night, was probably inspired by the well-known passage in Thucydides' account of the battle of Epipolae. Here are to be found all the details used by Arnold: a night-attack, fought upon a plain at the top of a cliff, in the moonlight, so that the soldiers could not distinguish clearly between friend and foe, with the resulting flight of certain Athenian troops, and various 'alarms,' watchwords, and battle-cries shouted aloud to the increasing confusion of all.

The most important sentence for Arnold was perhaps the following, given here in Thomas Arnold's rendering: 'They saw one another as men naturally would by moonlight; that is, to see before them the form of the object, but to mistrust their knowing who was friend and who

was foe.' The whole account of the battle should be compared (Book VII., chapters 43-4).

Thucydides was of course one of Dr. Thomas Arnold's favourite authors, and was studied in the fifth and sixth forms at Rugby. There is evidence that the passage about the 'night-battle' was familiar coin among Rugbeians. The first volume of Dr. Arnold's own edition of Thucydides had appeared in 1830; the third and last volume in 1835. The description of the battle is more than a historical record. It has precisely that added touch of poetic and philosophical suggestion which—be it in Virgil or the scraps from a French review—was always enough to set Arnold's creative powers in motion. 'Who could be certain of anything?' It is Thucydides' question, and, with heightened implication, it is Arnold's also.

The passage in Sophocles (*Antigone*, ll. 583ff.) which may be referred to in the fifteenth line of the poem is somewhat different in general character and intention from Arnold's. The Greek author has reference only to the successive blows of Fate which fall upon a particular family which has been devoted to destruction by the gods. The plight described metaphorically by the English poet is conceived to have fallen upon the human race as a whole:

Blessed are those whose life no woe doth taste!  
 For unto those whose house  
 The Gods have shaken, nothing fails of curse  
 Or woe, that creeps to generations far.  
 E'en thus a wave, (when spreads,  
 With blasts from Thrakian coasts,  
 The darkness of the deep,)  
 Up from the sea's abyss  
 Hither and thither rolls the black sand on,

And every jutting peak,  
Swept by the storm-wind's strength,  
Lashed by the fierce wild waves,  
Re-echoes with the far-sounding roar.

I see the woes that smote, in ancient days,  
The seed of Labdacos . . .<sup>1</sup>

This is the passage commonly cited as the one to which Arnold refers in the lines,

Sophocles long ago  
Heard it on the Ægean, and it brought  
Into his mind the turbid ebb and flow  
Of human misery.

But there are other parts of Sophocles which may very well have been also in Arnold's mind. *The Women of Trachis* has these significant lines:

For as one sees, when North or South wind blows  
In strength invincible,  
Full many a wave upon the ocean wide,  
Sweeping and rushing on,  
So like a Cretan sea,  
The stormy grief of life  
Now bringeth low the son of Cadmos old,  
Now lifts him up again.<sup>2</sup>

Also to be noticed is this passage from *Œdipus at Colonus*:

And here this woe-worn one  
(Not I alone) is found;  
As some far northern shore,  
Smitten by ceaseless waves,

<sup>1</sup> This and the following translations are Plumptre's.

<sup>2</sup> *The Women of Trachis*, ll. 112ff.

Is lashed by every wind;  
 So ever-haunting woes,  
 Surging in billows fierce,  
 Lash him from crown to base.<sup>3</sup>

Mr. Allen Hazen has indicated to us also these lines from *Philoctetes*:

And wonder holds my soul,  
 How he, still hearing in his loneliness  
 The dashing of the breakers on the shore,  
 Endured still to live  
 A life all lamentable.<sup>4</sup>

### GROWING OLD

This appeared first in the *New Poems* of 1867, and in all volumes thereafter save the *Selections* of 1878. It is related to 'The Progress of Poesy.'

Browning's 'Rabbi ben Ezra' was first published in 1864 (*Dramatis Personae*): it is, as Professor DeVane has shown, in the nature of a reply to the *Rubáiyát of Omar Khayyám*. He suggests also that Arnold's 'Growing Old' is in turn a kind of answer to Browning.<sup>1</sup> This is not the only example of the interrelation of Arnold's poetry with that of his great contemporaries.

<sup>3</sup> *Oedipus at Colonus*, ll.1239ff. These first three passages were indicated by 'T.C.C.' in *Notes and Queries*, VOL.CLXXIV., no.4, p.57, in an article entitled, 'Arnold and Sophocles.' The article points out that the plays of Sophocles mention 'the sea between Greece and Asia Minor once by name'—in *Ajax* (l.461), when the hero asks if he shall cross the Ægean waters to his home; and that the passage from the *Antigone* is 'the only one which speaks of the waves as carrying anything and "turbid."'

<sup>4</sup> *Philoctetes*, ll.685ff.

<sup>1</sup> William C. DeVane, *A Browning Handbook*, New York, 1935, p.260.

## THE PROGRESS OF POESY

This appeared in 1867, and regularly thereafter, save in the *Selections*. The sub-title is no doubt meant to suggest a 'variation' of the theme treated by Thomas Gray in his Pindaric Ode of the same title. Both poets describe the progress of poetry under the figure of a flowing stream.

When one is aware that the fountain of Arnold's creative power as a poet was exhausted by 1867, more personal feeling is detected in this slight poem than might at first be evident.

In his copy of Voltaire, containing *Lettres en vers et en prose*, Arnold, with the comment 'old age & poetry' has entered a reference to the following: '*Rien n'est si triste qu'un poëte vétérân.*'<sup>1</sup> As early as 1852, he had written to Clough, 'What a difference there is between reading in poetry and morals of the loss of youth, and experiencing it!'<sup>2</sup> In 1853, he writes again, 'I am past thirty, and three parts iced over.'<sup>3</sup> His sense of the rapid failure of youth, with its elastic powers and its creative ardour, is frequently expressed throughout his correspondence—perhaps never better than in this even earlier letter to his sister:

The aimless and unsettled, but also open and liberal state of our youth we *must* perhaps all leave and take refuge in our morality and character; but with most of us it is a melancholy passage from which we emerge shorn of so many beams that we are almost tempted to quarrel with the law of nature which imposes it on us.<sup>4</sup>

1 Voltaire, Lettre CXIII, à Messieurs Desmahis et de Margenci, 1756, *Œuvres complètes*, Kehl, 1785-9, VOL.XV, p.236.

2 *Letters to Clough*, p.125.

3 *Ibid.*, p.128.

4 *Letters* I.14.

## NEW ROME

In the spring of the year 1873, Arnold and his family spent a month in Rome. In a letter to his mother, dated March 30, he says, 'The Storys (the American sculptor) are particularly kind.' His diary of the trip mentions a visit to the Vatican Museum on April 9, when he saw the so-called 'Vatican Cupid' for the first time.<sup>1</sup> On April 17 he tells his sister of the pleasure he takes in the statues at the Vatican.<sup>2</sup> In the diary is found also a manuscript of the poem.

'New Rome' was published in the *Cornhill Magazine* for June of the same year, and with a note, 'See *The Times* of April 15th.' The leading editorial for that day dealt with an Italian proposal for the municipal regulation of foreign ecclesiastical establishments in Rome. It reads in part: 'The modern city, in its material aspect, is emblematic of its social and economic conditions. The streets are narrow, irregular, tortuous, and dirty. The lodgings are bad and expensive. The hotels, so far as regards the buildings and the arrangements, are not, perhaps, the worst in Europe, but such as to call for the continual excuse that it is impossible, on any terms, to obtain good sites and the requisite space for better. The private houses in the city are all bad; where and how the poor live is a matter exciting a great deal of curiosity, but which none have the courage or self-sacrifice to inquire into. . . . It is really a fact that there is only one street which deserves to be called a street in Rome, and even it is too narrow in many parts to allow

<sup>1</sup> In the possession of Mrs. Norman Thwaites, the poet's grand-daughter.

<sup>2</sup> *Letters* II.96,97.

a foot pavement on both sides. . . . The excuse for every shortcoming is the immense obstruction of the palaces, conventual buildings, and churches, so closely packed as to leave no space for the people to live.'

An earlier passage spoke of the Italian poverty as 'past the understanding and imagination of our own well-fed, because hardworking, country.' The poem is, therefore, an amiable part of Arnold's extended satire upon the self-satisfaction of England.

### PIS-ALLER

This was printed in the *New Poems* of 1867, and regularly thereafter, save in the *Selections*. Such verse as this and its immediate predecessors show how hard-pressed Arnold was to provide sufficient material for his new volume.

The poem is a reply to the Catholic contention that all ultimate truth must be sought in revealed religion, not in the results obtained through a free play of the mind over the problem of existence. But it is difficult to make poetry out of a theological dispute.

### THE LAST WORD

This appeared in the volume of 1867, and regularly thereafter save in the *Selections*. This brief but very fine poem, somewhat more soldierly than Clough's spiritual 'Say Not the Struggle Nought Availeth,' reminds one also of Clough's

It fortifies my soul to know  
That, though I perish, Truth is so.



And Mr. Frederick Page has reminded us of Coventry Patmore's noble later poem in a similar vein, '*Magna est Veritas.*'

Arnold, with something of Obermann's '*Périssons en résistant,*' here heartens and consoles those 'Children of the Second Birth' who war against the Philistines and, in their weary siege feel the despair of 'Thyrsis':

Unbreachable the fort  
Of the long-batter'd world uplifts its wall;  
And strange and vain the earthly turmoil grows.

#### THE LORD'S MESSENGERS

This poem made its first appearance in the *Cornhill Magazine* for July, 1860, under the title, 'Men of Genius.' But it was not received into the poet's collected works until the edition of 1881. The resemblance of lines 10-24 to the last three paragraphs of 'Rugby Chapel' ('Servants of God!—or sons') is obvious, and may account for Arnold's reluctance to reprint the piece.

The magazine version had this opening stanza, afterwards omitted:

Silent, the Lord of the world  
Eyes from the heavenly height,  
Girt by his far-shining train,  
Us, who with banners unfurl'd  
Fight life's many-chanc'd fight  
Madly below, in the plain.

## A NAMELESS EPITAPH

In the *New Poems* of 1867 the title 'A Nameless Epitaph' was given to the following:

This sentence have I left behind:  
An aching body, and a mind  
Not wholly clear, not wholly blind,  
Too keen to rest, too weak to find,  
That travails sore, and brings forth wind,  
Are God's worst portion to mankind.

On the same page was the quatrain beginning 'Ask not my name,' which was entitled simply 'Another.' In 1869, the first epitaph was discarded, never to be revived, and the title transferred to the quatrain.

## BACCHANALIA

'Bacchanalia; or, the New Age' was first printed in the *New Poems* of 1867, and regularly thereafter, save in the *Selections*. The text was revised for the second edition of *New Poems*, 1868. There is no further evidence with respect to the date of its composition.

Arnold's interest in the Dionysiac revels is plainly seen in his first volume; but it is noticeable that in the poem which gives its title to that volume, the Reveller has 'strayed' from his companions to the solitude of Circe's palace where he has, to be sure, partaken of her magic potion, but is far removed from his wild and dissolute fellows. Arnold of course was incapable of describing the intoxicating delight of the Bacchic revelry. There is something here of Milton's sentiment,

But drive far off the barbarous dissonance  
 Of Bacchus and his revellers, the race  
 Of that wild rout that tore the Thracian bard  
 In Rhodope, where woods and rocks had ears  
 To rapture, till the savage clamor drowned  
 Both harp and voice; nor could the Muse defend.  
 Her son.<sup>1</sup>

It is therefore not surprising that in this late poem the modern age should be typified by the Bacchic rout, and that the function of the poet should be misconceived by bustling, practical men.

Throughout Arnold's verse, from 'Resignation' to 'Thyrsis' and 'Bacchanalia,' the poet is consistently represented as a lonely observer and student of human life, a conception later to be reflected in Arnold's doctrine of the intellectual detachment of the critic and of the spiritually-minded remnant of which he is the exponent.

In 'Bacchanalia' the development of Arnold's critical function is plainly disclosed. The peaceful pastoral strain, reminiscent of 'The Scholar-Gipsy,' with which the poem opens, is interrupted by more than the revellers; image and music give way to satire against the current Zeit-Geist and its noisy mediocrities. The reader is here rapidly moving towards the later work of Arnold as a critic of both literature and life and his perpetual protest against 'the grand name without the grand thing.' In the 'Epilogue to Lessing,' the critical faculty is even more in the ascendant.

#### EPILOGUE TO LESSING'S LAOCOÖN

This appeared in the *New Poems* of 1867, and was reprinted regularly thereafter, save in the *Selections*.

<sup>1</sup> *Paradise Lost*, VII.32ff.

The account of the poet's function, in the middle of the poem,

The *movement* he must tell of life,  
 Its pain and pleasure, rest and strife.  
 His eye must travel down, at full,  
 The long, unpausing spectacle . . .

hardly applies to Arnold's own poetry, in which the poet is invariably shown in isolation from the activity of life. However adequately he may treat the *mouvement de l'âme*, he fails utterly to paint the spectacle about him, which, in the preceding poem, indeed, he had described in a very different, perhaps contemptuous, fashion. The present verses, however, are the result rather of a critical meditation on the subject than of a poetic impulse from within him. He was, we may suppose, aware of the contrast between this piece and 'Bacchanalia,' a fact shown by his printing the two as companion poems.

Arnold's note-books betray only an occasional interest in Lessing; and his ten-volume edition of Lessing has few marks upon it—and none of interest here. The ideas of the poem set forth the familiar position of the *Laokoön*.

Perhaps Arnold's fullest statement of the greater adequacy of poetry, as compared with the other arts, appears in his introduction to the first volume of *The Hundred Greatest Men*. (Sampson Low, Marston, Searle, and Rivington, London, 1879.) He says, 'No man, however, can fully draw out the reasons why the human spirit feels itself to attain to a more adequate and satisfying expression in poetry than in any other of its modes of activity. For to draw them out fully we should have to go behind our own

nature itself, and that we can none of us do. . . . Compare [poetry] with . . . art. It is more intellectual than art, more interpretative. Along with the plastic representation it utters the idea, it thinks. Poetry is often called art, and poets are classed with painters and sculptors as artists. But Goethe has with profound truth insisted on the difference between them. "Poetry is held to be art," he says, "and yet it is not as art is, mechanism, mechanical. I deny poetry to be an art. Neither is it a science. Poetry is to be called neither art nor science, but genius." Poetry is less artistic than the arts, but in closer correspondence with the intelligential nature of man, who is defined, as we know, to be "a thinking animal;" poetry thinks, and the arts do not.<sup>1</sup>

Lines 49-60 of the poem were taken in 1888 as the motto for the Royal Academy.

The views on æsthetics expressed in the 'Epilogue' are only a part of that considerable body of literary criticism which is an increasing interest in Arnold's poetry. It is idle to deny that the poet's growing absorption in criticism had a curtailing effect upon the production of verse. Arnold, two years before his death, left the best unconscious testimony on this point in his account of Sainte-Beuve: 'But the critic in him grew to prevail more and more and pushed out the poet.'<sup>1</sup>

#### PERSISTENCY OF POETRY

This quatrain, copied in Arnold's note-book for 1867, was used as the prefatory poem to the volumes of 1867 and

<sup>1</sup> M.A.'s article on Sainte-Beuve, *Encyclopædia Britannica*, 9th ed., XXI.162.

1868; it was printed in italics on p.vi. The same use was made of it for the second volume of the edition of 1869. It received its present title in 1877, when it was included in the regular list of poems.

This pendant to 'Bacchanalia' is consistent with Arnold's usual sensitiveness to the 'unpoetic Zeit-Geist,' from the time of his early letters to Clough until his essay on Gray.

### A CAUTION TO POETS

The first draft of this 'oracular quatrain' is in the Yale MS. It is preceded by the following sentence, 'What it gives us no pleasure to conceive or make, it will give the world no pleasure to contemplate.'

The verses appear, under the present title, in the *New Poems* of 1867 and 1868; in the edition of 1869, they become the prefatory poem to volume I (p.viii). In 1877 they were restored to the body of the text. They are not included in the *Selections*.

Arnold sent them in a letter to Clough, December 14, 1852:

As for my poems they have weight, I think, but little or no charm.

What Poets feel not, when they make,  
A pleasure in creating,  
The world, in *its* turn, will not take  
Pleasure in contemplating.

There is an oracular quatrain for you, terribly true. I feel now where my poems (this set) are all wrong, which I did not a year ago: but I doubt whether I shall ever have heat and radiance enough to pierce the clouds that are massed round me.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Letters to Clough*, p.126.

It is significant that he is reflecting upon his recent *Empedocles* and its failure to 'give joy.' (See Preface to *Poems* of 1853.)

#### THE YOUTH OF NATURE

'The Youth of Nature' and 'The Youth of Man' are of course companion-pieces, and have stood side by side from the beginning. Both were included in the volume of 1852, and then discarded until 1855, when they appeared together once more. Neither one was admitted to the *Selections*.

In his note-book for 1852, Arnold has entered under date of January 4: 'windy bright day—walked alone along Rydal & Grasmere during afternoon service. finished Wordsworth's pindaric.' The allusion seems indubitably to be to this poem, but we cannot explain his conception of it as a 'pindaric.'

Just as the images of the first part of the poem are called up from Wordsworth, so are the concluding meditations on the place of Man and Nature. Wordsworth's *Prelude*, published shortly before the composition of 'The Youth of Nature' may well have initiated Arnold's reflections, with their Berkeleian question as to whether Nature lives in itself or in the eye of the beholder. The core of the poem and its final sentiment, however, are not so much Wordsworth's as they are the ancient classical problem of the Greek elegists, marvelling at the permanence of the objective world and the transitory life of Man.

THE YOUTH OF MAN

This is from the volume of 1852. For the volume of 1853 Arnold used two portions of the poem, with new titles, and thus gave them a separate existence; but he restored the poem to its original form in the volume of 1855 (*Poems*. Second Series).

The two portions of the poem which thus had an independent form in 1853 were the following: the paragraph commencing,

Murmur of living,  
Stir of existence,

entitled 'Richmond Hill,' and forming a fragment ten lines in length; the other the last seven lines, to which was given the title, 'Power of Youth.'

The scene in the completed poem is not necessarily Richmond Hill; nor need we determine the identity of the couple in whose honour this lyric was written. At the time of its composition the poet could not have reached his thirtieth year, and may very well have been younger.

The poem carries on the thought with which the preceding poem concludes. The metrical relationship is indicated by Arnold's entry in his note-book among the poems to be composed in 1852: 'pindaric "Sink o youth in thy soul." '

PALLADIUM

'Palladium' was first published in the *New Poems* of 1867, and regularly thereafter, save that it was not included in the *Selections* of 1878.



The poem is closely allied to this entry in the Yale Manuscript:

Our remotest self must abide in its remoteness awful & unchanged,  
presiding at the tumult of the rest[?] of our being, changing thoughts  
contending desires &c as the moon over the agitations of the Sea.

Finally developing this thought, with the Palladium as the image of the 'soul' or 'remotest self,' Arnold achieves perhaps his most classic and consummate expression of the doctrine of the inner and abiding reality—sought by Empedocles, Obermann, the Scholar Gipsy, by the lover of Marguerite, and the lover in 'The Buried Life.' Homer, who gave him so much else, was finally to serve him here. And the image is retained from the early prose draft:

So, in its lovely moonlight, lives the soul.  
Mountains surround it, and sweet virgin air.

In Scherer's *Alexandre Vinet* (Paris, 1853), is found the following sentence, '*Aujourd'hui ce palladium de l'humanité, de la vérité, de la vie, l'individualité est menacée d'une attaque redoutable.*'<sup>1</sup> Arnold, in his own copy, has under-scored that portion of the sentence indicated, and has written in the margin, 'Yes—l'individualité is all this—but it is always the better without the State than with it.' If we identify the poet's well-known belief regarding the hidden life of the soul with this *individualité*, the passage bears obvious relation to the theme of the poem, and may even have been its inspiration.

The connexion between the thought of the poem and Arnold's doubtless contemporary thought on religion has

been well suggested by Professor Douglas Bush: '*Palladium* is perhaps the most firm and finely rounded of Arnold's many poems in which morality is touched with emotion'<sup>2</sup>—though not, in this instance, necessarily the emotion inspired by a 'power not ourselves.'

Years after this poem, in a letter of May 30, 1883 to the *Pall Mall Gazette*, Arnold speaks of that 'something' which prompts us 'to live by our soul and imagination rather than by our senses. . . . The existence of this something is the ground of all hope, and must never, in our impatience at men's perversions, be forgotten.'<sup>3</sup>

### PROGRESS

The poem appeared in the volume of 1852, and was then discarded till 1867, when it was revised and restored to its place among the Lyric Poems. It was also given a place in the *Selections*.

It represents very well the advanced thought of 1852, particularly that of Renan, which aspired to keep the spirit of Christianity without the specific articles of its creeds. It is an appeal, moreover, for that life of enlightened morality and the imaginative reason which Arnold praises throughout his entire work—whose source was one, in his opinion, with Christianity. Although a close examination of the poem will hardly satisfy the great body of Christian believers, Arnold is here merely exalting what he later set

<sup>2</sup> *Mythology and the Romantic Tradition*, p.259. Professor Bush recalls that many critics have observed that '*Palladium*' is in the vein of Clough.

<sup>3</sup> The letter is reprinted in *Letters of an Old Playgoer*, no.4 in a series of 'Discussions of the Drama,' Dramatic Museum of Columbia University, New York, 1919, p 44 (also in de luxe ed of Arnold's works, VOL.IV.pp.250-75).

forth as the 'secret of Jesus'—His stress upon the inward life of man and its miraculous validity.

#### REVOLUTIONS

This poem, which appeared originally in the volume of 1852, was revived for the *Poems, Second Series*, 1855, and was reprinted regularly thereafter in the collected works. It was even given a place in the *Selections*. The text remained unchanged. The poem is curiously marked by the strained ingenuity of the 'Metaphysical' school.

#### SELF-DEPENDENCE

This poem appeared regularly from 1852 on, and was given a place in the *Selections* of 1878. Until 1881 the final stanza was set off from the rest of the poem as a separate portion of it.

This has been among the most popular of Arnold's reflective lyrics, no doubt because of its mingling of passion and sincerity with an austere philosophy. Its relation to the sonnet 'Quiet Work' will not escape the reader.

#### MORALITY

This poem, which appeared first in the volume of 1852, was reprinted in the succeeding volume (1853), and regularly thereafter; in 1853 it was placed immediately before 'Self-Dependence.' When included in the *Selections* it followed that poem. Such details of arrangement were regarded by the poet as of importance in the interpretation

of his thought; and it is therefore natural to consider the two poems as supplementing each other. The strain of thought is carried on into 'A Summer Night,' which was placed after 'Self-Dependence' on its first appearance, and after 'Morality' in the *Selections*.

The poem is a maturer utterance of the thought previously expressed 'To an Independent Preacher' and is central to Arnold's humanistic teaching.

### A SUMMER NIGHT

This poem, the exact setting of which has never been ascertained, was included in the volume of 1852. It was revived in 1855, and was the last poem in that volume. The incident is referred to in Arnold's elegy to the memory of his brother William, the poem entitled 'A Southern Night.' In 1869 the two poems were set side by side.

Mr. Frederick Page has suggested to us that the past moonlit night of 'restless pacings' and a 'throbbing heart' to which this poem and perhaps 'A Southern Night' also refer was a night in Switzerland at the time of 'A Farewell':

My horse's feet beside the lake,  
Where sweet the unbroken moonbeams lay,  
Sent echoes through the night to wake  
Each glistening strand, each heath-fringed bay.

The remainder of the earlier lyric goes on to suggest the unquiet lover of Marguerite wishing away his 'starting, feverish heart.' He longs wistfully, as on the later summer

evening, for force and will and central aim, in place of a world in which

we wear out life, alas!  
Distracted as a homeless wind,  
In beating where we must not pass,  
In seeking what we shall not find.

There are in the poem several refrains from Senancour, whose influence was strong at the time. Lettre XC of *Obermann*, full of thoughts similar to the reflective part of 'A Summer Night,' has this closely related passage, marked in Arnold's own copy:

*Profondeurs de l'espace, serait-ce en vain qu'il nous est donné de vous  
apercevoir? La majesté de la nuit répète d'âge en âge: malheur à toute  
âme qui se complaît dans la servitude!*

The imagery of the poem is related closely to 'Empedocles.' The address to the clear heavens

whose pure dark regions have no sign  
Of languor

recalls the passionate appeal of Empedocles to the stars as the night deepens round him on Etna:

No, no, ye stars! there is no death with you,  
No languor, no decay! languor and death,  
They are with me, not you! ye are alive—  
Ye, and the pure dark ether where ye ride  
Brilliant above me!

And the closing moral of 'A Summer Night':

How fair a lot to fill  
Is left to each man still!

recalls the advice given by Empedocles to Pausanias.

## THE BURIED LIFE

The first draft of 'The Buried Life' may have been written, as was that of 'Philomela,' on the fly-leaf of a book. Arnold writes to Victor Marshall on December 15, 1871:

. . . and will you tell your mother that the German novel I promised her containing the "*Buried Life*" had been carried off by some one, and I could not find it; so I will bring the volume with that poem in it to Westmoreland with me and ask her acceptance of it.<sup>1</sup>

It is, of course, possible that the poet is here referring, not to a manuscript, but to a translation of his poem into German, used in a printed book; but, if so, the translation as well as the novel has eluded us.

The poem was printed in the volume of 1852, revived in 1855, and assigned its final place among the Lyric Poems in 1869.

It bears obvious relation, in its opening motive, to the Marguerite series (cf. 'Isolation: to Marguerite') and, in the second half, to 'Dover Beach,' which poem it immediately followed in the volume of 1869. In *St. Paul and Protestantism* (p.142), Arnold introduces the following lines, which he acknowledges as his own in a letter to his mother (February 21, 1870):<sup>2</sup>

Below the surface-stream, shallow and light,  
Of what we *say* we feel—below the stream,  
As light, of what we *think* we feel—there flows  
With noiseless current strong, obscure and deep,  
The central stream of what we feel indeed.

1 An unpublished letter in the possession of Professor Arthur Kyle Davis, Jr., of the Department of English, the University of Virginia, with whose permission it is quoted here.

2 *Letters* II.p.28.

In the Yale Manuscript (p.9) is found the following pencilled sentence, which is utilized in the middle of this poem (lines

We have been on a thousand lines & on each have shown spirit talent even geniality but hardly for an hour between birth & death have we been on our own one natural line, have we been ourselves, have we breathed freely.

And later in the Yale MS.:

The real central life is something exquisitely kind.

So in the poem it is love which confers insight as the momentary release of a spirit subtly touched is attended by a vision of the truth. The wistful, halting questions with which the poem opens are resolved into the poetry with which it is brought to a conclusion.

#### LINES WRITTEN IN KENSINGTON GARDENS

The first draft, in pencil, of 'Lines written in Kensington Gardens,' is in the Yale MS., where it is found without title or date. As this version differs from the later ones in detail and in arrangement of stanzas, it is here printed.

The poem was included in the volume of 1852, but not reprinted till 1867. The text assumed its final form in 1877; it was included in the *Selections*.

In this lone open glade I lie  
Screen'd by dark trees on either hand:  
And at its head, to stay the eye,  
Those dark-topp'd red-bol'd pinetrees stand

The clouded sky is still & grey—  
Thro: silken rifts soft winks the sun:  
Light the clear foliaged chestnuts play:  
The massier elms stand grave & dun.

That child who darts across the glade  
Drags to his nurse his broken toy:  
The brown thrush crosses overhead  
Deep in her unknown day's employ.

Here where I lie what marvels pass  
active  
What swarmy endless life is here:  
Buttercups, & clover, daisies grass,  
An air-stirr'd forest, fresh & clear.

Not fresher is the mountain sod  
lone  
Where the tired angler lies, stretch'd out,  
And eas'd of basket & of rod  
Counts his day's spoil, the spotted trout

Yet here is peace for ever new  
Yet  
But here this calm is nothing new;  
When I who watch them am away  
Still all things in this glade go thro  
The stages of their quiet day.

quick  
In the huge world that rumbles nigh  
Be others happy if they can:  
But in my helpless cradle I  
Was looked on by the rural Pan <sup>1</sup>

1 This quatrain is placed at the right-hand side of the page.





pressed here as it is in 'Thyrsis' and, even more eloquently, in 'A Summer Night,' with its longing for clarity and enlargement of soul. The London park is a poor substitute for the English lakes, the mountains of Switzerland, and the 'warm, green-muffled Cumner hills.' But Arnold has, in spite of his old warning to the Independent Preacher that

Man must begin, know this, where Nature ends,

the power to draw from idyllic beauty and the common things of earth and sky much that can comfort and exalt man's spirit. In Kensington Gardens he was echoing what Wordsworth had said a half-century before him:

This did I feel, in London's vast domain.  
The Spirit of Nature was upon me there;  
The soul of Beauty and enduring Life  
Vouchsafed her inspiration, and diffused,  
Through meagre lines and colours, and the press  
Of self-destroying, transitory things,  
Composure, and ennobling Harmony.

There is a difference in tone, however. Wordsworth's voice is the voice of one remembering and expounding for Coleridge; Arnold's is that of tired man grateful for a present hour of rest and anxious lest the blessed mood depart.

#### A WISH

'A Wish' was first published in the *New Poems* of 1867, and appeared regularly thereafter.

Mrs. Sells very properly compares this poem with

Obermann's last letter.<sup>1</sup> But perhaps the best comment upon it is a passage from Arnold's unpublished letter to his mother, December 4, 1865: 'I remember thinking in the Cemetery at Rome, how well to die in a place like Rome and be buried in peace, with only an acquaintance like Odo Russell to see one put into the earth. It is not death which is in my eyes hideous—but it is its ceremonial.'<sup>2</sup>

### THE FUTURE

From 1852 to 1869 'The Future' had the place of honour as the final poem in the volume; and it has retained the position permanently in the group of Lyric Poems. In 1853 and 1854 it was furnished with prefatory lines:

For Nature has long kept this inn, the Earth,  
And many a guest hath she therein received—

That these were by Arnold himself is shown by the prose abstract for them in the Yale MS.:

Nature has long since kept this inn, the Earth, & seen so many successive floods of guests with their fashions & ridiculousnesses that no swagger of any new comer can impose upon her.

The figure is used in 'Empedocles'—the philosopher had himself described man as a 'rude guest' in the world.

This poem, with its familiar symbolism of the river (here representing the history of the race), can hardly be read as strictly harmonious or progressive; for to most

<sup>1</sup> *Matthew Arnold and France*, pp.234-5.

<sup>2</sup> Professor Whitridge, the present owner of the letter, called this passage to our attention.

readers it seems to intend one thing and to result as another. The River of Time, a continuous and winding stream, flowing from the pattern of the past into the far shape of things to come, is, one supposes, a partly Hegelian image, with that accompanying touch of austerity which belongs to absolute symbols. We wake to life upon the bosom of the stream, know our small and unpropitious measure of its course, and then close our eyes upon it for ever:

But what was before us we know not,  
And we know not what shall succeed.

Nor, for a time, does the figure falter. It is sustained into the penultimate stanza, with its progress towards a 'wider statelier stream' and the possibility of 'a solemn peace of its own.' But in the final stanza a new interest suddenly intrudes. The prediction at the close is not that of peace for the human race, nor of peace for the river, but of

Peace to the soul of the man on its breast—  
As the pale waste widens around him,  
As the banks fade dimmer away,  
As the stars come out, and the night-wind  
Brings up the stream  
Murmurs and scents of the infinite sea.

This is no other than that 'luminous home of waters' which opens, bright and tranquil, after the 'foiled, circuitous wandering' of Rustum's earlier course; this that 'sleepe after toyle, port after stormie seas,' which is meaningless apart from the destiny of the individual. The River of Time is here no more cosmic than the simple stream of the 'buried life' (p.195), which flows through man's central

being, and of which he is at certain happy moments conscious, until he

thinks he knows  
The hills where his life rose,  
And the sea where it goes.

## **ELEGIAC POEMS**



## THE SCHOLAR-GIPSY

'THE Scholar-Gipsy' took form gradually in Arnold's mind. The first reference to the source from which it was drawn is found in a pocket almanac for the year 1845, in which the poet has set down 'Glanvil's Vanity of Dog:' as the first in a list of books to be read 'From October 1845 to [blank].' This little book and the copy of Glanvill owned by the poet, with the inscription 'E Lib. M. Arnold 1844' on the fly-leaf, are now in the Yale Collection. The book, which was later given to Browning, contains no notes in the poet's hand, though it was, we may infer, the copy that lay by him in 'the grass' as he meditated on the significance of the Scholar's career.

The poem was first published in the volume of 1853, and was regularly reprinted thereafter, with only minor alterations in the text. It was prefaced by a passage from *The Vanity of Dogmatizing* of slightly less than two hundred words. As in other instances—notably in 'Tristram and Iseult'—the passage quoted by the poet was considerably condensed. He cared to introduce only such sentences and phrases as concerned his special purpose. The passage as written by Glanvill is as follows:

There was very lately a Lad in the *University of Oxford*, who being of very pregnant and ready parts, and yet wanting the encouragement of preferment; was by his poverty forc'd to leave his studies there, and to cast himself upon the wide world for a livelihood. Now, his necessities growing dayly on him, and wanting the help of friends to relieve him; he was at last forced to joyn himself to a company of *Vagabond Gypsies*, whom occasionally he met with, and to follow their Trade for a maintenance. Among these extravagant people, by the insinuating subtilty of his carriage, he quickly got



so much of their love, and esteem; as that they discover'd to him their *Mystery*: in the practice of which, by the pregnancy of his wit and parts he soon grew so good a proficient, as to be able to out-do his Instructours. After he had been a pretty while well exercis'd in the Trade; there chanc'd to ride by a couple of *Scholars* who had formerly bin of his acquaintance. The *Scholars* had quickly spyed out their old friend, among the *Gypsies*; and their amazement to see him among such society, had well-nigh discover'd him: but by a sign he prevented their owning him before that Crew: and taking one of them aside privately, desired him with his friend to go to an *Inn*, not far distant thence, promising there to come to them. They accordingly went thither, and he follows: after their first salutations, his friends enquire how he came to lead so odd a life as that was, and to joyn himself with such a *cheating beggerly* company. The *Scholar-Gypsy* having given them an account of the necessity, which drove him to that kind of life; told them, that the people he went with were not such *Impostours* as they were taken for, but that they had a *traditional* kind of *learning* among them, and could do wonders by the power of *Imagination*, and that himself had learnt much of their Art, and improved it further then themselves could. And to evince the truth of what he told them, he said, he'd remove into another room, leaving them to discourse together; and upon his return tell them the sum of what they had talked of: which accordingly he perform'd, giving them a full account of what had pass'd between them in his absence. The *Scholars* being amaz'd at so unexpected a discovery, earnestly desir'd him to unriddle the *mystery*. In which he gave them satisfaction, by telling them, that what he did was by the power of *Imagination*, his Phancy *binding* theirs; and that himself had dictated to them the discourse, they held together, while he was from them: That there were warrantable wayes of heightening the *Imagination* to that pitch, as to bind anothers; and that when he had compass'd the whole *secret*, some parts of which he said he was yet ignorant of, he intended to leave their company, and give the world an account of what he had learned.<sup>1</sup>

Arnold's intention of writing a poem on this subject is first revealed by the inclusion, in his list of poems proposed for 1849, of the title, 'the first mesmerist,' which is changed in his second list (as explained above, p.17), to 'the wandering Mesmerist.' The phrase, 'Scholar-Gipsy,' found in Glanvill, preserves this idea of a wanderer, which had, it would seem, early become an element in Arnold's poetic scheme; but it was permitted to drop out of the poet's (condensed) quotation from Glanvill, so that the title is commonly regarded as having originated with Arnold.

From the passage in Glanvill he also excluded the incident of the wonder-working powers of the gipsy, which is out of harmony with the pensive figure of the wandering scholar, which was taking form in his mind. The supernatural element is thus reduced to a minimum, so that nothing is made in the poem of the acquisition of the art of ruling 'the working of men's brains,' in order to bind them to what thoughts one will. But the incident, providing an example of the power to 'heighten or control' the imagination, offers an explanation of the occurrence of the word 'mesmerist' in the earliest versions of the title. This power, which would today more naturally be called thought-transference or hypnotism, Arnold would have termed, in 1845, Mesmerism, a subject not only of widespread public interest, but of peculiar importance in the life of his mother, and in that of her friend, Miss Martineau. The latter's paper on Mesmerism had appeared in the *Athenæum* in November, 1844.

The poet's interest in gipsies probably began in boyhood, in the Lake District. The 'wild outcasts of society'

must have been familiar to him in Wordsworth's poem, 'Gipsies,' in the volume of 1807, and their availability for literary treatment of another sort in George Borrow's *Zincali, or an Account of the Gypsies in Spain* (1841) and *The Bible in Spain* (1843). (It is to be remembered that Borrow's *Romantic Ballads* may have been used by Arnold in writing 'The Forsaken Merman.') A boy's natural interest in gipsies must have been heightened by his journey with his father to Spain, in 1839, at the age of sixteen.

A highly romantic view of the gipsy is found in the 'Stanzas on a Gipsy Child by the Sea-shore,' and a realistic one, which reminds a reader of the paintings of George Morland, in 'Resignation,' both poems in the volume of 1849. But the conception of gipsy life set forth in 'The Scholar-Gipsy' differs from both these earlier views. The wandering scholar betrays an un-gipsylike disinclination to associate with his own kind, nor does he see enough of men to practise his art of subduing their thoughts to his own will. His search is philosophical—that of the sage living in retirement from the noisy and distracting world, and he may, therefore, fairly be associated in mind with Empedocles, with Obermann (that '*solitaire inconnu*'), and with the abbey-children at the close of the Chartreuse stanzas.

Arnold's introduction of the pastoral element is more readily understood. Not only does the scenery about Oxford make it appropriate, but the elegiac type is traditionally associated with pastoral poetry, even in English literature. On the other hand, the function of the shepherd, mentioned at the beginning of the poem, is not clear. What is the quest which is to be renewed by moonlight? Is it the same quest as that of the scholar-gipsy, or merely em-

blematic of the spiritual quest of the thoughtful soul? And who is the companion that is to share it? 'Thyrsis,' very probably, for Clough and Arnold are naturally associated in the reader's mind with the spiritual and philosophical 'quests' of their time. Moreover such companionship is implied by the conventions of pastoral poetry; cf. the line in 'Thyrsis,' 'Alas, for Corydon no rival now!'

Much discussion has been caused by the passage,

amongst us one,  
Who most has suffer'd takes dejectedly  
His seat upon the intellectual throne;  
And all his store of sad experience he  
Lays bare of wretched days.

During his first visit to America (1883-4), Arnold asserted that this was a reference to Goethe's *Dichtung und Wahrheit*.<sup>2</sup> In view of what Arnold had said elsewhere (notably, in 'Memorial Verses, April, 1850'), this identification was no less surprising than the charge of dejection thus brought against the 'physician of the iron age.'

There is even a temptation to think that, not Goethe, but Tennyson is really meant. Arnold's own distrust of Tennyson's profundity is well known. He believed Tennyson to be no 'great and powerful spirit in any line,'<sup>3</sup> and felt only fatigue at his 'dawdling' with the 'painted shell' of the Universe. However, he wrote in 1853 to John Duke Coleridge, who had detected Tennysonian echoes in 'Sohrab and Rustum,' that 'one has him so much in one's head, one

<sup>2</sup> See the excerpt from the Boston Letter of November 26, 1883 in *The Worcester Spy*, reprinted by Chilson Leonard in *Modern Language Notes*, VOL. XLVI, February, 1931, p. 119.

<sup>3</sup> Letters I.239.

cannot help imitating him sometimes.<sup>4</sup> In Tennyson's 'Palace of Art' the soul of Man is represented as evading the deeper problems of the Universe by taking selfish refuge in aesthetic experience. The result is dismal (lines 213ff. of the 1842 revised text, italics ours):

Full oft the riddle of the painful earth  
Flash'd thro' her as she sat alone,  
Yet not the less held she her *solemn* mirth,  
And *intellectual throne*.

One is struck not merely by the phrase which Arnold was to make famous, but also by the suspicion that 'The Palace of Art' may well have seemed to him like an unconscious and ironical autobiography of Tennyson himself.

The words 'This for our wisest' seem not inappropriate to Tennyson, who in 1850 had succeeded to the 'intellectual throne' of the laureateship, succeeding Wordsworth. Arnold complains over having to listen to the frequent disparagement of the old laureate in praise of the new one. In his view a bad exchange had been made.

Moreover, Tennyson had just published, in the same year, 'In Memoriam,' his most 'intellectual' poem, in which he lays bare his store of sad experience and of wretched days, telling us

how the dying spark of hope was fed,  
And how the breast was soothed, and how the head,  
And all his hourly varied anodynes.

Certainly Tennyson's grief over the loss of Hallam was that of one who 'most had suffered,' whereas Goethe's

<sup>4</sup> See above, p.83n.

'suffering' had been more that of a merely sensitive listener to the still, sad music of humanity. And Arnold's phrase, 'hourly varied anodynes' perfectly describes the thought, structure, and actual composition of 'In Memoriam.'

This identification must not of course be insisted upon, but poets' explanations of their own references are notoriously unsatisfactory. In 1883 Arnold would hardly have cared to recount for an American audience any such early and impatient reference to his distinguished fellow-poet. It is indeed possible that the passage originally related to both Tennyson and Goethe at once and blended Arnold's reflections upon both.<sup>5</sup>

'The Scholar-Gipsy' was, from the first, a favourite with the readers of Arnold's poetry, and has often been considered his masterpiece. He himself was its severest critic, and oddly enough, regarded it as inferior to 'Sohrab and Rustum.' In writing to Clough on November 30, 1853, he gave utterance to what is perhaps the only serious charge that is to be brought against it:

I am glad you like the Gipsy Scholar—but what does it *do* for you? Homer *animates*—Shakespeare *animates*—in its poor way I think Sohrab and Rustum *animates*—the Gipsy Scholar at best awakens a pleasing melancholy. But this is not what we want.

The complaining millions of men  
Darken in labour and pain—

what they want is something to *animate* and *ennoble* them—not merely to add zest to their melancholy or grace to their dreams.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>5</sup> Arnold's note-books show many early translations in English from Goethe's *Aus meinem Leben*, but it is interesting that the passages which Arnold was moved to record have nothing in common with the melancholy wisdom of the thinker described in 'The Scholar-Gipsy.'

<sup>6</sup> *Letters to Clough*, p.146.

Mr. F. R. Leavis suggests<sup>7</sup> that there is in 'The Scholar-Gipsy' something of the spirit of Keats. This is no doubt very true, particularly of the second stanza of the 'Ode to Autumn,' which might almost be interpolated into Arnold's poem:

Who hath not seen thee oft amid thy store?  
 Sometimes whoever seeks abroad may find  
 Thee sitting careless on a granary floor,  
 Thy hair soft-lifted by the winnowing wind;  
 Or on a half-reaped furrow sound asleep,  
 Drows'd with the fume of poppies, while thy hook  
 Spares the next swath and all its twined flowers:  
 And sometimes like a gleaner thou dost keep  
 Steady thy laden head across a brook;  
 Or by a cyder-press, with patient look,  
 Thou watchest the last oozings hours by hours.

To the odes, as Mr. Leavis indicates, the stanza of Arnold's poem must owe much of its form and effect.

The closing figure of the Tyrian trader has caused much controversy. Professor E.K. Brown has well defended it against the strictures of such critics as George Saintsbury, who wrote: 'No ingenuity can work out the parallel between the "uncloudedly joyous" scholar who is bid avoid the palsied, diseased *enfants du siècle*, and the grave Tyrian who was indignant at the competition of the merry Greek, and shook out more sail to seek fresh markets.'<sup>8</sup> Professor Brown replies:

Unclouded joyousness is not, however, the kernel of the gipsy's character; nor is he contrasted merely, or even mainly, with the

<sup>7</sup> In his *Revaluation*, London, 1936, p. 190.

<sup>8</sup> *Matthew Arnold*, p. 42.

'palsied diseased *enfants du siècle*.' The Tyrian trader's flight before the clamorous spirited Greeks is exactly analogous to the scholar gipsy's flight before the drink and the clatter of the smock-frock'd boors or before the bathers in the abandoned lasher or before the Oxford riders blithe. Both flights express a desire for calm, a desire for aloofness. And little ingenuity is required to discover a similarity between the gipsies and those 'shy traffickers, the dark Iberians' to whom the Tyrian trader flies.<sup>9</sup>

The details of this closing figure are not, however, very clear at first. Readers, asked to paraphrase what Arnold has said, give it a varied meaning. Our own view is that everything depends upon taking 'come' as a past participle in the lines:

And saw the merry Grecian coaster come,  
Freighted with amber grapes, and Chian wine.

The Tyrian trader, moving from the open sea into his familiar port, sees the prow of the Greek rival, a usurper,

Lifting the cool-hair'd creepers stealthily,  
The fringes of a southward-facing brow  
Among the Ægean isles.

The Grecian coaster, arrived first, is anchored beneath the protecting vines which hang down from the cliffs. Straightway the Tyrian trader seeks far to the West a quieter and more congenial market.

This 'end-note of relief' is typical of Arnold. It is like his other tableau endings—the Nile in 'Mycerinus,' the 'white-robed slave' in 'The World and the Quietist,' the closing song of Callicles on the slopes of Etna, the hunter

<sup>9</sup> 'The Scholar Gipsy,' *Revue Anglo-Américaine*, VOL. XII, February, 1935, pp. 224-5.



on the tapestry and the Merlin story in 'Tristram,' the Oxus in 'Sohrab,' the children by the abbey wall in the 'Grande Chartreuse,' the signal-elm of 'Thyrsis,' the darkling plain of 'Dover Beach,' and the march to the City of God in 'Rugby Chapel.' The analogy of the Greek chorus is, as we have said, unescapable.

### THYRSIS

'Thyrsis' was first published in *Macmillan's Magazine* for April, 1866, as the leading contribution. It was reprinted in every subsequent edition of the author's poems. In the *New Poems* (1867) and in the second edition of that volume (1868), it was prefaced by the following verses:

Thus yesterday, to-day, to-morrow come,  
They hustle one another and they pass;  
But all our hustling morrows only make  
The smooth to-day of God.

—From *Lucretius*, an unpublished Tragedy.

They were dropped in 1869, and never used again.<sup>1</sup> Their appropriateness is not easily discovered. What is known of Arnold's *Lucretius* is discussed elsewhere (pp.34off.).

Clough died on November 13, 1861. Before the expiration of the month Arnold paid tribute to his memory in his lecture as Professor of Poetry at Oxford; at the end of *On Translating Homer: Last Words*, Clough is praised for 'the Homeric simplicity of his literary life.' Just what Arnold meant to imply by these words it is not altogether easy to say. He wished no doubt to commend Clough's devotion to literature, in which there had been no admix-

1 They were, however, copied into his diary for 1868.

ture of unworthy or merely professional motive; but it seems odd to apply to such merit the adjective 'Homeric.' He perhaps was thinking of the fresh, direct tone of 'The Bothie,' where hexameter verse, a chief theme of Arnold's lecture, had been employed. In Clough's poetry Arnold had always felt the absence of a certain beauty, a view which is well expressed in a letter of February, 1849: 'You succeed best you see, in fact, in the hymn, where man, his deepest personal feelings being in play, finds poetical expression as *man* only, not as artist:—but consider whether you attain the *beautiful*, and whether your product gives PLEASURE, not excites curiosity and reflexion.'<sup>2</sup> This opinion, which Arnold never really altered, made it difficult for him to compose a eulogy which should be as sincere as was his devotion to the memory of his dead friend. He felt, as did all who had known Clough well, that he had never fulfilled—in literature, at least—the great promise of his Oxford days.

It is not known exactly when the elegy was begun. On January 22, 1862, in thanking Mrs. Clough for certain lines of her husband's verse which she had sent him, Arnold writes: 'I shall take them with me to Oxford, where I shall go alone after Easter;—and there, among the Cumner hills where we have so often rambled, I shall be able to think him over as I could wish.'<sup>3</sup> In a list of works to be composed in 1863 is found the entry, 'Clough & the Cumner hill-side,' but this title is not cancelled, as is generally done when the proposed poem has been completed. Over three years later the poet, in a letter to his mother (April 7, 1866), asserts that the elegy had been 'forming

<sup>2</sup> *Letters to Clough*, p. 99.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 160.

itself' in his mind for the past two years, and this is perhaps as much as there is now to be known. When five years after the death of Arnold, Mrs. Clough asked for the details of its composition, Mrs. Arnold could only reply that it was almost certainly 'published as soon as it was written.'<sup>4</sup>

Arnold, who never spared his own poetical productions, criticized 'Thyrsis' as containing too little about Clough. In a letter to J. C. Shairp, dated April 12, 1866, and written therefore in the month when 'Thyrsis' was printed, he says,

'Thyrsis' is a very quiet poem, but I think solid and sincere. It will not be popular, however. It had long been in my head to connect Clough with that Cumner country, and when I began I was carried irresistibly into this form; you say, truly, however, that there is much in Clough (the whole *prophet* side, in fact) which one cannot deal with in this way, and one has the feeling, if one reads the poem as a memorial poem, that not enough is said about Clough in it; I feel this so much that I do not send the poem to Mrs. Clough. Still Clough *had* this idyllic side, too; to deal with this suited my desire to deal again with that Cumner country: anyway, only so could I treat the matter this time. *Valeat quantum*.<sup>5</sup>

No critic today would attack 'Thyrsis,' however, for its failure to commemorate Clough. There is perhaps as much about Clough in 'Thyrsis' as there is about Edward King in 'Lycidas' or about Keats in 'Adonais'; in any case, whatever be the shortcomings of the subject, the real tribute to the poet consists in the value of the poem itself, and not in the references to him which it embodies.

4 Unpublished letter, Mrs. Arnold to Mrs. Clough, December 16, 1893.

5 *Letters* I.327.

In 'Thyrsis' Arnold asserts that Clough's poetry written after his departure from Oxford

took a troubled sound  
Of storms that rage outside our happy ground.

This is perhaps an example of poetic license, for the verse composed at Oxford had its own note of perplexity and melancholy which reflected the religious stirring and controversy within the university. Moreover, in 'The Bothie,' 'Amours de Voyage,' and some of his later satires, Clough's humour and gaiety were at their best.

In respect to diction, it is sufficient praise of 'Thyrsis' to say that it is worthy of its companion-piece, 'The Scholar-Gipsy.' Arnold himself described the style in a letter to his mother, April 7, 1866, which she was asked to pass on to his brother Edward:

The diction of the poem was modelled on that of Theocritus, whom I have been much reading during the two years this poem has been forming itself, and . . . I meant the diction to be so artless as to be almost heedless. However, there is a mean which must not be passed, and before I reprint the poem I will consider well all objections. The images are all from actual observation, on which point there is an excellent remark in Wordsworth's notes, collected by Miss Fenwick. The cuckoo on the wet June morning I heard in the garden at Woodford,<sup>6</sup> and all those three stanzas you like are reminiscences of Woodford. Edward has, I think, fixed on the two stanzas I myself like best in "O easy access" and "And long the way appears." I also like "Where is the girl," and the stanza before

6 'Arnold, no doubt, thought that the cuckoo migrated in June because "in June, He changes his tune" . . . a change also heard in the promiscuity of courtship. Actually, the old birds do not go until August, and the young remain in England up to the end of September.' H. J. Massingham, *Poems about Birds*, etc., London, 1919, p. 396.

it, but that is because they bring certain places and moments before me. I have heard nothing about the poem, except that Bradley is greatly pleased with it. It is probably too *quiet* a poem for the general taste, but I think it will stand wear.<sup>7</sup>

A review of Theocritus had been completed, according to the Arnold note-books, in 1863—a reading that doubtless inspired the lively and beautiful translation of the fifteenth idyll, with its hymn to Adonis, published in the essay, 'Pagan and Christian Religious Sentiment,' the *Cornhill Magazine*, April, 1864. Because of this effort at translation Arnold particularly felt himself under the influence of the Greek pastoral at the time his elegy for Clough was forming.<sup>8</sup> But the indebtedness of the poem to Theocritus, save for the name 'Thyrsis' and the references in the ninth, tenth, and nineteenth stanzas, is of a very general sort, quite different from Shelley's debt in 'Adonais' to Bion and Moschus. Arnold probably meant to confess nothing more than the influence upon him of the straightforward, unadorned style of the rural idylls of Theocritus. His attitude to nature, particularly his love of flowers and of familiar hillsides, is certainly not derived from the Sicilian. His love of botany was both ardent and technical, as any reader of his letters knows; his genial scorn of men without botany is a family tradition. He needed neither Theocritus nor Virgil to tell him 'what white, what purple fritillaries' grew by Ensham or by Sandford. The images of the poem, as he himself remarks, are English, 'all from

<sup>7</sup> *Letters* I.325.

<sup>8</sup> He used the conventional names of 'Corydon' and 'Thyrsis' with more than common appropriateness, for Clough in his own 'pastoral,' 'The Bothie,' heads section two:

'Et certamen erat, Corydon cum Thyrside, magnum.'

actual observation'; and he is aware that his elegy as a whole is far different from such as Dorian shepherds sang to Proserpine.

The image of the 'throne of Truth' (l.144), high on the mountain tops, 'in cloudy air,' recalls John Donne's third Satire (ll.79-82):

On a huge hill,  
Cragged, and steep, Truth stands, and he that will  
Reach her, about must, and about must go;  
And what the hill's suddenness resists, win so.

Identification of the various places mentioned in the poem has caused through the years much civil strife at Oxford.<sup>9</sup> Yet the most militant topographer, if he has a touch of poetry in his nature, will hardly hold that the secret of the poem lies on any given hillside or by any chosen elm-tree. 'A fugitive and gracious light we seek— shy to illumine.'

#### MEMORIAL VERSES. APRIL, 1850

The manuscript, a fair copy, without erasures, signed 'A.,' is among the Yale Papers. The poem was printed in *Fraser's Magazine* for June, 1850. It was included in the volume of 1852, and again in that of 1855. After 1869, when the text was given its final form, it appeared regularly as one of the Elegiac Poems.

The poem was written at the request of Edward Quillinan, Wordsworth's son-in-law and neighbour of the

<sup>9</sup> The most thorough study of the 'Scholar-gipsy's country' has been made by Sir Francis Wylie, lately Warden of Rhodes House. We are privileged to present his essay, here printed for the first time, in an appendix, pp.351ff.

Arnold family at Fox How. Arnold wrote to Clough, in an undated letter, probably of May, 1850, that he had 'dirged W.W. in the grand style.'<sup>1</sup>

This elegy is the first of Arnold's poems, apart from the sonnets, to disclose his abilities as a literary critic. It is a remarkable achievement for a man of twenty-seven, in that it contains as much of definitive utterance and of permanent value as any of his critical essays. In defining the essential quality of Wordsworth's power, this poem is unsurpassed by the better-known essay on Wordsworth introductory to Arnold's selections from that poet in the Golden Treasury Series (1879).

The views of Byron and Goethe here expressed are extended in the later essays. Byron's great force—his 'sincerity and strength'—makes him of lasting value, even though 'the moment he reflects he is a child.'<sup>2</sup> All this is simply to say again:

He taught us little; but our soul  
Had *felt* him like the thunder's roll.

And in 1878 Arnold could still praise Goethe as 'the clearest, the largest, the most helpful thinker of modern times.'<sup>3</sup>

The easy flow of the octosyllabic couplets, which Arnold had used before in 'Resignation' (1849), anticipates the short, irregular lines which he frequently used for later elegies. Its informal, often prosaic, style enables the poet to handle his critical material with perfect freedom; but

<sup>1</sup> *Letters to Clough*, pp. 114-15.

<sup>2</sup> 'Byron,' first printed in March, 1881; see *Essays in Criticism, Second Series*, pp. 185, 193.

<sup>3</sup> 'A French Critic on Goethe,' first printed in January, 1878; see *Mixed Essays*, p. 311.

there is, nevertheless, a natural restraint, even in this simple, poetic medium, which prevents him from exhibiting that smiling arrogance which was to offend so many in his prose writings. Nor did this medium encourage him to quote from French critics or to repeat, with unrelenting gusto, phrases which he had come upon in the course of his reading, or even those which he had made himself and which he was determined that the reading public should neither forget nor misapply. From these mannerisms he was saved by verse.

#### STANZAS IN MEMORY OF EDWARD QUILLINAN

The stanzas, dated December 27, 1851, are found in Rotha Quillinan's Album. They were printed in the volume of 1853, and regularly thereafter. In the final arrangement of the poems the elegy was placed immediately after 'Memorial Verses.'

Edward Quillinan (1791-1851), poet, son-in-law of William Wordsworth, published in 1814 *Dunluce Castle*, in 1816 a dreary narrative poem, *The Sacrifice of Isabel*, and in 1817 *Elegiac Verses addressed to a Lady*.<sup>1</sup> His shorter verses were collected posthumously in 1853, and published with a memoir by William Johnston. The best thing that can be said of Quillinan's poetry is that it was commended by Wordsworth.

Quillinan, who was of Irish extraction, after a career in the army, settled in 1821 at Rydal, partly because of his enthusiasm for Wordsworth. His daughter, Rotha, is the

<sup>1</sup> The latter consisted of poems addressed to Lady Brydges, wife of Sir Egerton Brydges, Quillinan's first father-in-law, in memory of her sons.



subject of a pleasant sonnet by that poet, whose god-child she was. Quillinan's first wife, who had been for a long time out of her mind, died in 1822 from burns received when her clothing caught fire. He married, as his second wife, in the spring of 1841, Dora Wordsworth, who died in 1847.

Quillinan's last illness began in the spring of 1851, after a prolonged exposure while on a fishing expedition. To this period the first stanza of Arnold's poem probably refers.

On June 20, 1849, Quillinan had thus written to Henry Crabb Robinson regarding Arnold's first volume, *The Strayed Reveller, and Other Poems*:

If you have read, will you honestly tell me what you think of Mathew Arnold's Poems? I like some of them much, in spite of their pedantries & affectations—but I do not think they are sufficiently intelligible for general reading. You & I can see, through all that affectation of mystification & all that uneasy labour to be quaint & brilliant, & to show that *we* have measured the Greek choral metres etc, that *the man's a man for a' that*. Yet I doubt whether he is tall enough to reach the golden bough he aims at. But he may grow, if he is not stunted by injudicious flattery. To tell you the truth much as I do like the Arnolds, & more than like some of them, Jane & her Mother for example, I never suspected there was any *poetry* in the family till I read M.A.'s.<sup>2</sup>

#### STANZAS FROM CARNAC

A manuscript of this poem, in Arnold's hand, signed with his initials, and dated October 23, 1859, is found in a small private journal used by the poet's mother. This journal

<sup>2</sup> Edith J. Morley, ed., *The Correspondence of Henry Crabb Robinson with the Wordsworth Circle*, Oxford, 1927, pp 695-6.

passed into the possession of the late Mrs. Florence Vere O'Brien, daughter of William Arnold, and is now owned by Miss Dorothy Ward.

The poem was first printed in the volume of 1867, with the title, 'Stanzas composed at Carnac,' and the date, May 6, 1859. The tenth stanza had the following annotation, 'The Author's brother, William Delafield Arnold [1828-1859], Director of Public Instruction in the Punjab, and author of *Oakfield or Fellowship in the East* [1853], died at Gibraltar, on his way home from India, April the 9th, 1859.'

Arnold visited Brittany in the course of his tour of French schools. In his diary for 1859 <sup>1</sup> occur the following passages:

April 13th. M. Rapet came for me—as I was going out with him received Susy's letter—"Dear Willy died at San Roque"!

May 6. Friday. Off at 5½ in diligence for Auray. Reached Auray about 4 p.m. drove straight to Carnac. Back to Auray & slept at the Pavillon d'en Haut.

He writes to his wife, after his return to Paris, on May 8, 1859:

I left the diligence at Auray at half-past four in the afternoon, after a sitting of eleven hours, and immediately ordered a conveyance for Carnac, about ten miles off on the sea-shore. The great Druidical monument is there, and I stopped at Auray on purpose to see it. It is a very wild country—broom and furze, broom and furze everywhere—and a few patches of pine forest. The sea runs into the land everywhere, and beautiful church towers rise on all sides of you, for this is a land of churches. The stones of Carnac are very singular, but the chapel of St. Michel, on a hill between the

<sup>1</sup> Owned by A. Edward Newton.

stones and the village of Carnac, I liked better still; the view over the stones and the strange country of Morbihan (the little sea), on the spur of Carnac by the sea, and beyond the bay and peninsula of Quiberon, where the emigrants landed, and beyond that the Atlantic. All this at between six and seven on a perfectly still, cloudless evening in May, with the sea like glass, and the solitude all round entire. I got back to Auray at eight.<sup>2</sup>

The same day he writes to his mother, also from Paris.

I thought of Willy the other day at Carnac while I looked over the perfectly still and bright Atlantic by Quiberon Bay, and saw the sails passing in the distance where he would have passed had he lived to come home. . . . I went to Carnac to see the Druidical stones, which are very solemn and imposing. The sea is close by, with the sickle-shaped peninsula of Quiberon, where the emigrants landed and were beaten by Hoche, sweeping out into it.<sup>3</sup>

The form of the poem as found in Mrs. Arnold's journal is as follows:

Stanzas composed at Carnac,

May 6<sup>th</sup>, 1859

Far on its rocky knoll descried  
St. Michael's chapel cuts the sky.  
I climb'd;—beneath me, bright and wide,  
Lay the lone coast of Brittany.

---

Bright in the sunset, weird and still,  
It lay beside the Atlantic wave,  
As if th' enchanter Merlin's will  
Yet bound it from his forest grave.

<sup>2</sup> *Letters* I.82-3.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, I.85.

Behind me, on their grassy sweep,  
Bearded with lichen, old and grey,  
The giant Stones of Carnac sleep  
In the mild evening of the May.

No priestly stern procession now  
Streams through their rows of pillars old;  
No victims bleed, no Druids bow;  
Sheep make the furze-grown nave their fold.

From bush to bush the cuckoo flies,  
The orchis red gleams everywhere;  
Gold broom with furze in blossom vies,  
The bluebells perfume all the air:

---

And o'er the glistening lonely land  
Rise up, all round, the Christian spires.  
The Church of Carnac, by the strand,  
Catches the westering sun's last fires.

And there, across the watery way,  
See, low above the tide at flood,  
The sickle sweep of Quiberon Bay  
Whose beach once ran with loyal blood;

---

And, beyond that, the Atlantic wide.—  
All round, no soul, no boat, no hail!  
But, on th' horizon's verge descried,  
Hangs, touch'd with light, one distant sail.

Ah! where is he, who should have come  
Where that far sail is passing now,  
Past the Loire's mouth, and by the foam  
Of Finistère's unquiet brow,

---

Home, round into the English wave?—  
He lingers where the Rock of Spain  
Mediterranean waters lave;  
He enters not th' Atlantic Main.

Oh could he once have reach'd this air  
Freshen'd by plunging tides, by showers!  
Have felt this breath he lov'd, of fair  
Cold northern fields, and grass, and flowers!

He long'd it, he press'd on— In vain!—  
At the Straits fail'd that Spirit brave.  
The South was parent of his pain,  
The South is mistress of his grave.

#### A SOUTHERN NIGHT

This poem appeared first in *Victoria Regia*, a miscellany edited by Adelaide A. Procter, and published by Emily Faithfull in 1861. The elegy was reprinted in *New Poems*, and whenever the collected poetical works were reissued. In the edition of 1869, Arnold's earlier lyric, 'A Summer Night' was inserted between the 'Stanzas from Carnac' and this poem, in order to emphasize a contrast which the poet described in the fourth and fifth stanzas, and a note referring the reader to the earlier poem was added.

William Arnold's 'private teen' is sufficiently explained by the account in Arnold's letter to his mother, written from Paris, April 14, 1859, on learning of his brother's death,

How strange it seems that he should have overlived his first terrible illness when his wife was alive to nurse him and he had but one child to suffer by his loss, to die now alone, with only a chance

acquaintance to attend him, and leaving those four poor little orphans, to whom no tenderness can ever quite replace a father and a mother! And then that he should have overlived the misery of his poor wife's death to struggle through a year's loneliness, and then to die too. Poor Fanny! she at Dhurmsala, and he by the Rock of Gibraltar.<sup>1</sup>

Compare with this a second letter to Mrs. Arnold written after the publication of the poem, which expresses his satisfaction with it, December 18, 1861.<sup>2</sup>

The vignette of the girl, coming by moonlight to meet the ship of her pirate lover (stanzas 26-28), is only one example of Arnold's natural romanticism.

The short fourth line of each stanza, it may be observed, has something of the elegiac effect gained by a similar device in Keats' *La Belle Dame sans Merci*.

#### HAWORTH CHURCHYARD

A fair copy of lines 48-54 and 66-71, signed 'Matthew Arnold,' is among the Yale Papers; the original manuscript has not come to light.

The elegy, signed 'A' and dated April, 1855, appeared in *Fraser's Magazine* for May, 1855. Charlotte Brontë had died on the last day of March, in the fortieth year of her age. Harriet Martineau, who was supposed to be in her last illness, lived for many years after the publication of this poem, dying in 1876, at the age of seventy-four. Her survival perhaps embarrassed the poet, for he could not very well reprint his verses, with their consolatory reflec-

1 *Letters* I.80.

2 *Ibid.*, I.155-6.

tions on her approaching demise, after her recovery. He did not really like Miss Martineau, her theories, or her writings, but had said as much as he honestly could—perhaps more—on the assumption that her life was nearing its end.

Arnold wrote to his mother, April 25, 1855:

There will be some lines of mine in the next *Fraser* (without name) on poor Charlotte Brontë. Harriet Martineau is alluded to in them, and if she is well enough you must forward the copy of the magazine which I will send you to her, after you have read the lines. I am glad to have the opportunity to speak of her with respect at this time, and for merits which she undoubtedly has.<sup>1</sup>

His next letter to his mother shows that he already had misgivings about the poem. This letter is undated, but was probably written in May of the same year:

As to the poem in *Fraser*, I hope K. sent you a letter I wrote to her on that subject, in which I told her that I knew absolutely nothing of Harriet Martineau's works or debated matters—had not even seen them, that I know of, nor do I ever mention her creed with the slightest applause, but only her boldness in avowing it. The want of independence of mind, the shutting their eyes and professing to believe what they do not, the running blindly together in herds, for fear of some obscure danger and horror if they go alone, is so eminently a vice of the English, I think, of the last hundred years—has led them, and is leading them into such scrapes and bewilderment, that I cannot but praise a person whose one effort seems to have been to deal perfectly honestly and sincerely with herself, although for the speculations into which this effort has led her I have not the slightest sympathy. I shall never be found to identify myself with her and her people, but neither shall I join, nor have I the least community of feeling with, her attackers.

<sup>1</sup> *Letters* I.44.

And I think a perfectly impartial person may say all in her praise that I have said.<sup>2</sup>

The meeting of Miss Martineau and Miss Brontë, mentioned at the beginning of the poem, occurred on December 21, 1850, at the home of Edward Quillinan, who died some six months later. The names of the two ladies are inscribed, above the date, in Rotha Quillinan's manuscript-album. This book also contains the names of Samuel Taylor Coleridge, Hartley Coleridge, Wordsworth, Southey, Moore, Crabbe, Hood, Joanna Baillie, B. W. Procter, Campbell, and Rogers. Scott's poem, 'Tis well the gifted eye which saw' may be found in *Dora Wordsworth Her Book*, edited by F. V. Morley, London, 1924, p.78. On the evening of the same day Arnold wrote to his mother:

At seven came Miss Martineau and Miss Brontë (Jane Eyre); talked to Miss Martineau (who blasphemes frightfully) about the prospects of the Church of England, and, wretched man that I am, promised to go and see her cow-keeping miracles to-morrow—I, who hardly know a cow from a sheep. I talked to Miss Brontë (past thirty and plain, with expressive gray eyes, though) of her curates, of French novels, and her education in a school at Brussels, and sent the lions roaring to their dens at half-past nine, and came to talk to you.<sup>3</sup>

His reference to the 'master's accent' of Charlotte Brontë in her 'feigned story of passionate life'—*Jane Eyre* had appeared in 1847—was meant to pass as praise for a novel which he never admired. In 1853, upon the appearance of *Villette*, he confided his real opinion of Charlotte

<sup>2</sup> *Letters* I.44-5.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, I.13.



Brontë to his sister, Mrs. Forster, in a letter dated April 14, 1853:

Why is *Villette* disagreeable? Because the writer's mind contains nothing but hunger, rebellion, and rage, and therefore that is all she can, in fact, put into her book. No fine writing can hide this thoroughly, and it will be fatal to her in the long run.<sup>4</sup>

But in elegiac poetry a poet is not upon oath. In 1855, when the stream of his poetic production was already failing in force and in volume, Arnold gladly seized upon a theme dealing with these two famous women, for elegy had become his one form of natural poetic utterance.

Of the Brontë family, of whom he had undertaken to write, he knew all too little. Haworth churchyard he had, pretty certainly, never seen, though he had read, or been told, of the approach to it from Keighley. In any case, it would hardly occur to him, or to any poet meditating an elegy, that it was necessary to visit the newly-made grave of the person commemorated.

But he had made, as indeed the very title reveals,<sup>5</sup> the unfortunate assumption that the members of the Brontë family were all buried together in one plot of the churchyard. With this mistaken notion in mind, he wrote of Charlotte, the last of the children to die,

Round thee they lie—the grass  
Blows from their graves to thy own!

But there is no grass on the graves, for the Brontës were buried in a vault within the edifice itself. The Reverend J. C. Hirst, rector of Haworth, writes us as follows:

<sup>4</sup> *Letters* I.29.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. lines 83–5 of the poem as printed below.

The grave in which the Brontës were put was a vault inside the old church. It lay immediately under the east wall, on the west side of the wall . . . The builders, when Haworth Church was rebuilt in 1879-1881, were instructed to leave the Brontë vault intact.

Moreover, Anne Brontë, who is mentioned in lines 156-8:

She, whose genius, though not  
Puissant like thine, was yet  
Sweet and graceful;

is buried not at Haworth, but at Scarborough, where she died in 1849.

Arnold's blunders with respect to 'Haworth Churchyard' are comparable with those in 'The Church of Brou.' In this poem, however, nothing is gained by departure from the actual facts.

In the spring of 1877, after a lapse of twenty-two years, Dean Boyle (apparently in a letter) asked the poet to revive the elegy, and Arnold replied, on March 11, 1877, saying that he had 'forgotten the poem about Charlotte Brontë and Harriet Martineau.' This assertion must be taken with a grain of salt, for Arnold's poetic destitution was now such as to cause him to scan everything that he had ever printed with the most anxious care in search of material to lend bulk to his collected poems, a new edition of which was about to appear in this year, 1877. He had already laid the poem under contribution by extracting from it a lyric entitled 'Early Death and Fame,' which consists of some twenty lines, beginning, 'For him who must live many years' (lines 121-39). He had inserted this in the *New Poems* of 1867, and in the collected edition of 1869. In the latter it was classed as a lyric, a designation

which it retained thereafter. It is unlikely that the poet had forgotten the origin of these lines.

He added in his letter to Dean Boyle, in reference to 'Haworth Churchyard:'

I think there were things not bad in it, but I do not want to over-praise a personage so antipathetic to me as H.M. My first impression of her is, in spite of her undeniable talent, energy and merit—what an unpleasant life and unpleasant nature!<sup>6</sup>

In reprinting the poem many changes were made. Four disagreeable stanzas, one of which is an apostrophe to Death, a plea for Miss Martineau's life, the two stanzas following it, in which the consolations for the dying were administered—these had proved premature—and a stanza of transition to the Brontës were dropped. No attempt was made to fill the gap left by the removal of 'Early Death and Fame'; and the passage about the Reverend Patrick Brontë was cancelled, perhaps because the poet felt that there was enough about the family without this. An Epilogue, with a Hegelian hint of immortality, was added, which had the merit of altering a conclusion too reminiscent of that of 'The Church of Brou.'

The poem as it appeared originally in the pages of *Fraser's Magazine* follows:

Haworth Churchyard,

April, 1855.

Where, under Loughrigg, the stream  
Of Rotha sparkles, the fields  
Are green, in the house of one  
Friendly and gentle, now dead,

# ELEGIAC POEMS

233

Wordsworth's son-in-law, friend—  
Four years since, on a mark'd  
Evening, a meeting I saw.

5

Two friends met there, two fam'd  
Gifted women. The one,  
Brilliant with recent renown,  
Young, unpractis'd, had told  
With a Master's accent her feign'd  
History of passionate life:  
The other, maturer in fame,  
Earning, she too, her praise  
First in Fiction, had since  
Widen'd her sweep, and survey'd  
History, Politics, Mind.

10

15

They met, held converse: they wrote  
In a book which of glorious souls  
Held memorial: Bard,  
Warrior, Statesman, had left  
Their names:—chief treasure of all,  
Scott had consign'd there his last  
Breathings of song, with a pen  
Tottering, a death-stricken hand.

20

25

I beheld; the obscure  
Saw the famous. Alas!  
Years in number, it seem'd,  
Lay before both, and a fame  
Heighten'd, and multiplied power.  
Behold! The elder, to-day,  
Lies expecting from Death,  
In mortal weakness, a last  
Summons: the younger is dead.

30

35

First to the living we pay  
Mournful homage: the Muse  
Gains not an earth-deafen'd ear.

Hail to the stedfast soul,  
Which, unflinching and keen, 40  
Wrought to erase from its depth  
Mist, and illusion, and fear!  
Hail to the spirit which dar'd  
Trust its own thoughts, before yet  
Echoed her back by the crowd! 45  
Hail to the courage which gave  
Voice to its creed, ere the creed  
Won consecration from Time!

Turn, O Death, on the vile,  
Turn on the foolish the stroke 50  
Hanging now o'er a head  
Active, beneficent, pure!  
But, if the prayer be in vain—  
But, if the stroke *must* fall—  
Her, whom we cannot save, 55  
What might we say to console?

She will not see her country lose  
Its greatness, nor the reign of fools prolong'd.  
She will behold no more  
This ignominious spectacle, 60  
Power dropping from the hand  
Of paralytic factions, and no soul  
To snatch and wield it: will not see  
Her fellow-people sit  
Helplessly gazing on their own decline. 65

Myrtle and rose fit the young,  
Laurel and oak the mature.  
Private affections, for these,  
Have run their circle, and left  
Space for things far from themselves, 70  
Thoughts of the general weal,

Country, and public cares:  
Public cares, which move  
Seldom and faintly the depth  
Of younger passionate souls 75  
Plung'd in themselves, who demand  
Only to live by the heart,  
Only to love and be lov'd.

How shall we honour the young,  
The ardent, the gifted? how mourn? 80  
Console we cannot; her ear  
Is deaf. Far northward from here,  
In a churchyard high mid the moors  
Of Yorkshire, a little earth  
Stops it for ever to praise. 85

Where, behind Keighley, the road  
Up to the heart of the moors  
Between heath-clad showery hills  
Runs, and colliers' carts  
Poach the deep ways coming down, 90  
And a rough, grim'd race have their homes—  
There, on its slope, is built  
The moorland town. But the church  
Stands on the crest of the hill,  
Lonely and bleak; at its side 95  
The parsonage-house and the graves.

See! in the desolate house  
The childless father! Alas—  
Age, whom the most of us chide,  
Chide, and put back, and delay— 100  
Come, unupbraided for once!  
Lay thy benumbing hand,  
Gratefully cold, on this brow!  
Shut out the grief, the despair!

Weaken the sense of his loss! 105  
 Deadened the infinite pain!

Another grief I see,  
 Younger: but this the Muse,  
 In pity and silent awe  
 Revering what she cannot soothe, 110  
 With veil'd face and bow'd head,  
 Salutes, and passes by.

Strew with roses the grave  
 Of the early-dying. Alas!  
 Early she goes on the path 115  
 To the Silent Country, and leaves  
 Half her laurels unwon,  
 Dying too soon: yet green  
 Laurels she had, and a course  
 Short, yet redoubled by Fame. 120

For him who must live many years  
 That life is best which slips away  
 Out of the light, and mutely; which avoids  
 Fame, and her less-fair followers, Envy, Strife,  
 Stupid Detraction, Jealousy, Cabal, 125  
 Insincere Praises:—which descends  
 The mossy quiet track to Age.

But, when immature Death  
 Beckons too early the guest  
 From the half-tried Banquet of Life, 130  
 Young, in the bloom of his days;  
 Leaves no leisure to press,  
 Slow and surely, the sweet  
 Of a tranquil life in the shade—  
 Fuller for him be the hours! 135  
 Give him emotion, though pain!

# ELEGIAC POEMS

237

Let him live, let him feel, *I have liv'd.*  
 Heap up his moments with life!  
 Quicken his pulses with Fame!

And not friendless, nor yet 140  
 Only with strangers to meet,  
 Faces ungreeting and cold,  
 Thou, O Mourn'd One, to-day  
 Enterest the House of the Grave.  
 Those of thy blood, whom thou lov'dst, 145  
 Have preceded thee; young,  
 Loving, a sisterly band:  
 Some in gift, some in art  
 Inferior; all in fame.  
 They, like friends, shall receive 150  
 This corner, greet her with joy;  
 Welcome the Sister, the Friend;  
 Hear with delight of thy fame.

Round thee they lie; the grass  
 Blows from their graves toward thine. 155  
 She, whose genius, though not  
 Puissant like thine, was yet  
 Sweet and graceful: and She—  
 (How shall I sing her?)—whose soul  
 Knew no fellow for might, 160  
 Passion, vehemence, grief,  
 Daring, since Byron died,  
 That world-fam'd Son of Fire; She, who sank  
 Baffled, unknown, self-consum'd;  
 Whose too-bold dying song 165  
 Shook, like a clarion-blast, my soul.

Of one too I have heard,  
 A Brother—sleeps he here?—  
 Of all his gifted race



Not the least-gifted; young, 170  
 Unhappy, beautiful; the cause  
 Of many hopes, of many tears.  
 O Boy, if here thou sleep'st, sleep well!  
 On thee too did the Muse  
 Bright in thy cradle smile: 175  
 But some dark Shadow came  
 (I know not what) and interpos'd.

Sleep, O cluster of friends,  
 Sleep! or only, when May,  
 Brought by the West Wind, returns 180  
 Back to your native heaths,  
 And the plover is heard on the moors,  
 Yearly awake, to behold  
 The opening summer, the sky,  
 The shining moorland; to hear 185  
 The drowsy bee, as of old,  
 Hum o'er the thyme, the grouse  
 Call from the heather in bloom:

Sleep; or only for this  
 Break your united repose. 190

A.

## RUGBY CHAPEL

The manuscript of 'Rugby Chapel,' written on six quarto leaves, is among the Yale Papers. There have been trifling corrections in the course of making a fair copy.

The poem was first printed in the *New Poems* of 1867, and appeared regularly thereafter. Fewer changes in the text were made than is usual in poems reissued by Arnold.

Dr. Thomas Arnold died in 1842. In the interval be-

tween his death and the publication of this elegy, all Arnold's best poetry had appeared, and in the body of that work nothing was more remarkable than the number of elegies and poems in elegiac mood. The poet had written notable dirges on Wordsworth, Obermann, William Arnold, and others. But he had paid no tribute to his father, a man whose reputation was still growing. This omission must have been called to his attention more than once by members of the family, and, perhaps, chiefly by his mother. In 1855 she sent him a letter of Thomas Arnold's, found thirteen years after his death, in which he had spoken—no doubt with his usual seriousness—of the education and future of his children. In replying to this letter, Arnold wrote to his mother:

He was not only a good man saving his own soul by righteousness, but . . . he carried so many others with him in his hand, and saved them, if they would let him, along with himself.<sup>1</sup>

The metaphor by which Dr. Arnold is represented as guiding a small company through a pass in the mountains during a heavy storm is peculiarly appropriate to the Lake District, with which the memory of his father was closely associated in the poet's mind, and it may well have been suggested by some actual occurrence of his boyhood.

Arnold dated the poem November, 1857, and it was probably begun at that time, but it could hardly have been completed for many years. (There is not, as one might suppose, a record of any visit to Rugby in November.) Its continuation was stimulated in the following year by the appearance of a review of *Tom Brown's Schooldays* in the

1 *Letters* I.42.

*Edinburgh Review* <sup>2</sup> by Fitzjames Stephen. Though the review could hardly have been, as the poet intimated, the origin of the elegy, it did arouse a desire on Matthew Arnold's part to do justice to his father's memory. Stephen writes smilingly of the exaggerated earnestness of Dr. Arnold's training at the school, of the Doctor's alleged want of humour, which led the Rugby boy to the point where 'he never ties his shoes without asserting a principle,' never puts on his hat without founding himself on an 'eternal truth.' Praepostor's penny canes, according to the reviewer, were turned into 'the sword of the Lord and of Gideon.'

After the appearance of the volume of 1867, Arnold wrote to his mother, August 8, 1867:

I knew, my dearest mother, that the Rugby Chapel Poem would give you pleasure: often and often it had been in my mind to say it to you, and I have foreborn because my own saying of my things does not please me. It was Fitzjames Stephen's thesis, maintained <sup>2</sup>, of Papa's being a narrow bustling fanatic, which moved me first to the poem. I think I have done something to fix the true legend about Papa, as those who knew him best feel it ought to run: and this is much——.<sup>3</sup>

It seems clear that Mrs. Arnold had known nothing of the poem in the meantime.

To write a memorial of Dr. Arnold was no easy task, even with the necessary poetic impetus; for though the poet was in full sympathy with the moral fervour of his father, he lacked the religious conviction which was its source. He could hardly write of Dr. Arnold and omit all reference to his Christian faith; therefore the poet fell in-

<sup>2</sup> VOL. CVII., January, 1858, pp. 172-93.

<sup>3</sup> *Letters to Clough*, Appendix I p. 164.

evitably into the traditional language of Christianity, and we read with a certain surprise the words of the author of 'Dover Beach' and the Chartreuse stanzas about the saving of souls, the journey to the city of God, and the future life. But by 1867 Arnold's agnosticism was much less assured than it had been in 1852. He had already begun in prose his work of restating the essentials of Christianity for his own time, and that restatement is, in many striking ways, a continuation of Dr. Arnold's own liberalism in theology. In the sonnet entitled 'Immortality' in the 1867 volume he distinctly implied the possibility of survival for souls sufficiently heroic to rise by their inherent spiritual power to eternal life. Furthermore, in the Epilogue to 'Haworth Churchyard' he expresses a kind of belief in a future existence:

In the dark fermentation of earth,  
In the never idle workshop of nature,  
In the eternal movement,  
Ye shall find yourselves again!

This passage, added to the elegy as a kind of corrective to the note of sentimentality with which the poem originally ended, should be compared with the lines (37-51) in 'Rugby Chapel' in which the poet imagines the soul of his father to be in the 'sounding labour-house vast of being:'

Yes, in some far-shining sphere,  
Conscious or not of the past,  
Still thou performest the word  
Of the Spirit in whom thou dost live.

It was not difficult for the poet to believe in a kind of immortality for the Head Master of Rugby. Moreover he was ready to believe that such souls had existed before,

and were indeed the saviours of mankind. In the concluding paragraphs of the elegy he gave expression to this conviction (lines 153-208)—a view which he had embodied more falteringly in an earlier poem, 'Men of Genius,' which had appeared in the *Cornhill Magazine* in 1860. The last two stanzas of this lyric bear a striking resemblance in imagery and language to the passage cited from 'Rugby Chapel,' a fact which may account for Arnold's reluctance to reprint it. When he did so, in 1881, he altered the diction and gave it a new title, 'The Lord's Messengers.' How much of all this attempt to lend a religious ardour to 'Rugby Chapel' represents a genuine conviction on the poet's part must be left to the judgement of the individual reader.

R. H. Hutton describes Arnold's unrhymed and freely-cadenced verses, of which 'Rugby Chapel' is a notable example, as 'poems of recitative.'<sup>4</sup> The phrase is a happy one for the most part, but it does not adequately suggest the intimate, responsive effect—with all the sincerity and directness of the spoken word—which Arnold could attain in this medium when he was at his best.

#### HEINE'S GRAVE

'Heine's Grave' was first published in the *New Poems* of 1867, and appeared regularly thereafter, save that Arnold rejected it from the *Selections*. In the edition of 1869 it was removed from the elegiac group and classed as a lyric, but in 1877 it was returned to its original position. The text remained unaltered after 1877.

<sup>4</sup> *Literary Essays*, London and New York, 1892, p.338.

The visit to Montmartre Cemetery here recorded appears to have been paid on Tuesday, September 14, 1858. Judging from the number of references to 'Heine's Grave' in the note-books, the poem gave Arnold considerable trouble. In the note relating to his projected work for 1862, found at the beginning of the note-book for that year, he records his intention to finish 'Heine's Grave.' Twice during 1862 and five times in the early months of 1863 he has references to his task; the last of these is the entry of April 19, in which month, we may conclude, the poem was completed.

In May, 1848, Arnold wrote to his mother:

I have just finished a German book . . . a mixture of poems and travelling journal by Heinrich Heine, the most famous of the young German literary set. He has a good deal of power, though more trick; however, he has thoroughly disgusted me. The Byronism of a German, of a man trying to be gloomy, cynical, impassioned, *moqueur*, etc., all *à la fois*, with their honest bonhommistic language and total want of experience of the kind that Lord Byron, an English peer with access everywhere, possessed, is the most ridiculous thing in the world. . . . I see the French call this Heine a 'Voltaire au clair de lune,' which is very happy.<sup>1</sup>

Something of this early feeling about Heine is to be traced in the poem. But by March, 1861, Arnold was assuring Clough that Alfred de Musset and Heine were 'far more profitable studies' than Tennyson, 'if we are to study contemporaries at all.'<sup>2</sup>

During the months of preparation for his poem and for the essay, originally a lecture at Oxford, which was finished

<sup>1</sup> Letters I.9-10.

<sup>2</sup> Letters to Clough, p. 154.

in the early summer of 1863, Arnold read widely in Heine's own work—the *Reisebilder* chiefly, and a number of French versions of Heine's poems and criticisms on him from the old files of the *Revue des Deux Mondes*. An account of this reading is afforded by the note-books. From the Hartz-journey described in the *Reisebilder* come the details of one of Arnold's chief pictures, that of the youthful poet in the May afternoon climbing his beloved mountain. The scenery, the Brocken-tower, the description of evening—Heine's own passage which inspired it is a glorious morning-scene—the descent of the Lower Hartz, the legend of Ilse, and the iron cross on the Rock are all derived from Heine's own familiar sketch. In Arnold's version the incident loses nothing of its poetic power and moving beauty.<sup>3</sup>

The truest inspiration for the poem—at least for its completion in the early months of 1863—seems to have been an article by Saint-René Taillandier, '*Poètes contemporains de l'Allemagne*,' from the *Revue des Deux Mondes* of April 1, 1852 (pp. 5–36). It is an important document for any student of Arnold's poetry or prose. The note-books reveal Arnold's own familiarity with it; it stresses what became the theme of the essay—Heine's own estimate of himself as '*un bon soldat dans la guerre de délivrance du genre humain*.'

The article in the *Revue* is prefaced by an engraving of the arresting portrait by Ch. Gleyre of Heine on his death-bed. Much of the opening of Arnold's poem must have been inspired by that picture, which itself is poetry. Saint-René Taillandier gives this significant mention of it; after

3 See 'Die Harzreise,' *Reisebilder I., Gesammelte Werke*, Berlin, 1887, vol. 3, pp. 3, 44–6, 47, 50, 61, 63, 65–69, 70–71, 72, 73.

paying tribute to the '*fantaisie ailée*' which enabled Heine to triumph over his years of suffering:

*Voyez-le sur ce lit de douleur où un artiste éminent nous le représente ici, considérez cette tête fine et pensive où le mal physique semble accuser plus vivement l'originalité de la vie intérieure: ce qui est manifeste dans ce commentaire si vrai, ce qui éclate dans la délicatesse du visage, dans le sourire des lèvres, dans ce regard à demi fermé où ne pénètre plus qu'un dernier rayon de lumière, c'est la sérénité imperturbable, c'est la victoire de l'humour sur les plus cruelles souffrances qui puissent enchaîner l'essor de l'âme.*<sup>4</sup>

Elsewhere in the article Taillandier emphasizes Heine's humour as the '*fond de sa poésie*,' and pays it an elaborate tribute as a form of '*mysticisme littéraire*.'<sup>5</sup> Does one here have the clue to the famous stanza of Arnold's poem:

The Spirit of the world,  
Beholding the absurdity of men—  
Their vaunts, their feats—let a sardonic smile,  
For one short moment, wander o'er his lips.  
*That smile was Heine!*—for its earthly hour  
The strange guest sparkled; now 'tis pass'd away.<sup>6</sup>

Saint-René Taillandier also suggests, as Arnold does, that the highest reaches of poetry are not those of mere mockery and scorn. He feels, with Arnold, Heine's strange unrest, the unrest of one who '*porte en lui toutes les inquiétudes d'une grande littérature déchue de son idéal*,'<sup>7</sup> and

4 *Revue*, p.8.

5 *Ibid.*

6 Taillandier also cites (p.32) the scene of the *Romancero* wherein Heine dreams of Jehuda ben Halevy, the great Jewish poet of the Middle Ages, and amid the spectres of his dream recognizes ben Halevy by the '*mystérieux sourire de ces deux belles lèvres harmonieusement assorties comme des rimes; les poètes seuls en ont de semblables*.'

7 *Revue*, p.34.



who has found in raillery only a '*sérénité incomplète et fausse*'.<sup>8</sup> In an earlier essay, Taillandier had already called on Heine to write '*poésie tout à fleur d'âme*'<sup>9</sup> and to calm and elevate men's souls, as is the duty of a poet.

In Taillandier's major article there is also a passage which may well account for the close of Arnold's poem in which he asks that the Spirit of the world may give him a milder and happier life than Heine's—

May'st thou the rapture of peace  
Deep have embreathed at its core.

The passage in the *Revue* runs:

*On raconte que Dante, sur la fin de sa vie, fatigué des agitations et des luttes, avait coutume de se promener aux abords d'un cimetière, et comme on lui demandait ce qu'il cherchait en ce lieu funèbre: «La paix,» répondit-il. La paix! je me rappelle que c'est là le titre de la plus belle pièce du Livre des Chants. La paix, ô poète, faut-il vous rappeler celui qui la possède. . . .»*<sup>10</sup>

Taillandier also recalls a passage from the *Romancero* which may well have suggested the central contrast in Arnold's poem—that of the dying Heine in Paris with the brilliant youth among the Hartz mountains. In fact, Arnold read the *Romancero* in the *Revue*, where it is printed with an introductory commentary. One part of this commentary, in its relation to ideas developed by Arnold, is as significant as the material just cited:

*Voilà plus de trois ans en effet que l'auteur d'Atta-Troll est sur son lit de douleur, frappé d'une paralysie qui ne laisse plus entrer dans*

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., p.35.

<sup>9</sup> '*De l'état de la poésie en Allemagne,*' *Revue des Deux Mondes*, tome iv, November 1, 1843, p.188.

<sup>10</sup> '*Poètes contemporains,*' *Revue*, p.36.

*ses yeux qu'un dernier rayon de lumière. Ces mots, Aristophane mourant, un ami a pu les imprimer sans aucune indiscretion maladroite; M. Henri Heine lui-même parle sans cesse de sa prochaine mort; il voit s'avancer l'hôtesse fatale, il la raille et la défie gaiement. Si l'homme de Pascal méprise l'univers qui l'écrase, il se garde bien de railler dans ce solennel et formidable passage d'une vie à l'autre; celui que l'humour emporte sur ses ailes semble habiter déjà je ne sais quelle région inconnue, du haut de laquelle il prend en pitié et ne saurait voir sans éclater de rire toutes les misères et tous les contre-sens d'ici-bas. L'humoriste est un mystique à sa manière, c'est-à-dire un homme qui s'élève au-dessus de la réalité et qui la transfigure par sa gaieté hardie, comme le mystique par l'extase.—«O mon collègue, Merlin l'enchanteur, s'écrie le poète, me voilà semblable à toi, lorsque, dans la forêt de Brocéliande, tu voyais s'approcher ton heure dernière, mais combien je te porte envie! C'était sous de beaux arbres, au sein de la verdure, au chant harmonieux des oiseaux que tu attendais la mort; tu n'étais pas immobile sur un grabat au milieu du tumulte de Paris!»—Ce collègue de Merlin qui se meurt à Paris, l'Allemagne sait bien que c'est le plus poétiquement doué de ses enfans; elle sait ce qu'il souffre, et combien il lui serait doux d'exhaler au moins son dernier soupir sur le sol natal. Devant cette tombe si tristement creusée avant l'heure, les plus sévères ont oublié leurs rancunes; ils ont pardonné les irrévérences du railleur pour ne plus songer qu'au poète. On lit avec une sympathie ardente tout ce que des amis, des visiteurs comme M. Stahr, écrivent sur l'Aristophane mourant.<sup>11</sup>*

The mention of Aristophanes recalls also Heine's eleventh chapter of 'Ideas' from the *Reisebilder*, wherein he shows the close relation between tragedy and humour—how the poets have learned from the great First Poet, who, in his great World Tragedy has shown how to bring humour, in many thousands of acts, to its highest pitch. It is this relationship in Heine's own life which caught Arnold's fancy in Montmartre Cemetery in the autumn of 1858, and

remained the *leit motif* of his poem. The later lecture, in which Arnold moved 'even an Oxford audience to laughter' with samples of Heine's wit, was perhaps a more substantial performance. But the most appreciative reader of the essay would be the last to deny the unique value and true critical insight of the poem.

Arnold's assumption made in ll.98-100 that Heine was

that bard  
 Unnamed, who, Goethe said,  
*Had every other gift, but wanted love;*

is quite wrong, as Mr. J.B.Orrick has pointed out. He comments, 'It is hard to understand such a mistake. It is true that in the earlier editions of the *Gespräche* . . ., where Goethe's sentence occurs, the 'bard,' who was Platen, was 'unnamed'; but it is strange that the remark should have been thought to refer to Heine.'<sup>12</sup>

#### STANZAS FROM THE GRANDE CHARTREUSE

The 'Stanzas from the Grande Chartreuse,' signed Matthew Arnold, appeared in *Fraser's Magazine* for April, 1855, but the poem was not reprinted till 1867 (*New Poems*). In 1877 it was assigned a place among the Elegiac Poems. It was not included in the *Selections* (1878).

Arnold's visit to the Grande Chartreuse occurred on Sunday, September 7, 1851, while he was on his wedding

<sup>12</sup> *Matthew Arnold and Goethe*, Pub. of English Goethe Society, n.s., VOL.IV, London, 1928, pp.28-9. Mr. Orrick cites in Eckermann the conversation of December 25, 1825, and adds: 'In the *Nachwort zu Eckermann*, Vorrede zur 3ten Ausgabe, Eckermann's son says he discovered a note of his father's saying it was Platen who was referred to here, and the name was inserted in the text of subsequent editions.'

journey.<sup>1</sup> In a pencilled list of three poems to be written or completed in the year 1852 is found the title, 'the Chartreuse.'<sup>2</sup> This may have been the projected poem set down in the list for the previous year as 'world-religion stanzas.' It is to be remembered that, from an early period in his career, Arnold had intended to write a poem on the theme of the restrictions imposed upon the human spirit by the monastic life. See the poem, 'To Meta: The Cloister,' below (pp.338-40).

During the spring of the year 1851, Arnold had been reading Chateaubriand's *Mémoires*, and the influence of this author is to be felt in the poem. His *Génie du Christianisme* contains (Part III., book v. chapter 2) a significant passage on monasteries and their environment, entitled 'Harmonies Physiques,' which is followed by Lamartine's poem, 'La Chartreuse de Paris'; the prose passage reveals a treatment of the subject worthy of the closest comparison with Arnold's. The following sentence of Chateaubriand's may well have been in Arnold's mind as he developed the splendid simile with which his poem ends: '*Tout le monde a vu en Europe de vieilles abbayes cachées dans les bois où elles ne se décèlent aux voyageurs que par leurs clochers perdus dans la cime des chênes.*'

'Achilles' and the 'kings of modern thought' symbolize perhaps the active and the intellectual life of the times, in neither of which can the poet find much help.<sup>3</sup>

The account here given of the monastic life is, con-

1 On the 6th he was at Grenoble; on the 7th at Chambéry.

2 From the note-book for that year.

3 Sir Edmund Chambers thinks Achilles may represent Newman, who, on his return from Rome, founded with Hurrell Froude the *Lyra Apostolica*, the motto of which was paraphrased from *Iliad*, xviii.125, 'They shall know the difference, now I am back.' (*Arnold: Poetry and Prose*, Oxford, 1939.)

fessedly, that of an outsider, who necessarily lacks a detailed and consistent knowledge of the Carthusian ideal. What, for example, is the service or office described in the seventh and eighth stanzas?

The chapel, where no organ's peal  
Invests the stern and naked prayer—  
With penitential cries they kneel  
And wrestle; rising then, with bare  
And white uplifted faces stand,  
Passing the Host from hand to hand;

Each takes, and then his visage wan  
Is buried in his cowl once more.  
The cells!—the suffering Son of Man  
Upon the wall—the knee-worn floor—  
And where they sleep, that wooden bed,  
Which shall their coffin be, when dead!

It is in a high degree unlikely that Arnold was present at a conventual mass, which was regularly celebrated apart from visitors to the monastery. Even had he been present at the conventual mass, he would not have seen the Host passed 'from hand to hand.' If he did witness the mass from the somewhat distant tribune at the back of the Church of the Grande Chartreuse, he clearly mistook the Instrument of the Pax, which is in certain masses passed from hand to hand, for the sacred Host, which is, of course, handled only by the celebrant.<sup>4</sup> That the monks are de-

<sup>4</sup> The giving of the Pax or kiss of peace dates back to apostolic times, and was not confined to the sacred Mysteries. To greet one another '*in osculo sancto*' was usual in every religious gathering in the primitive church. After the Pax was introduced into the liturgies of the Church it was given in the form of an embrace and promiscuously, but as the separation of the sexes in the churches

scribed as standing confirms the fact that the ceremony was that of the Pax, inasmuch as recipients of the Host always kneel. Moreover, when a monk has received the Pax and passes it to his neighbour, he covers his head so that his face is 'buried in his cowl once more.' It might be assumed that Arnold had here confused the mass with the service of Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament; but this assumption is impossible since the Carthusians never have Benediction, except at Corpus Christi.

Other details of the Chartreuse are not accurate. For example, the Carthusians are not buried in their beds, but are simply clothed in their habits and placed upon a plank of wood. Indeed, the beds at the Grande Chartreuse were built into the wall and could hardly have been removed. And the 'penitential' cries had become by the nineteenth century very deteriorated utterances.

One minor detail of the poem, unimportant in itself, is nevertheless rich in what it suggests about the author. In lines 37-8, Arnold reminds us that among the austere

began to die out the Pax-board or Instrument of the Pax was gradually introduced, and its use had become general by the end of the thirteenth century. It took the form of a plaque of metal, ivory, or wood, decorated by some pious carving—usually the figure of the crucified Christ—which was kissed, first by the celebrant at the altar (who first kissed the corporal on which lay the sacred Host), then by the Deacon, and finally by the clergy in the stalls, who passed it from hand to hand. Such is the custom of the Carthusian Mass to this day. The use of the Instrument of the Pax was not introduced into the Carthusian Order until the year 1319, when the General Chapter declared that '*. . . pax sumatur in ecclesia cum tabula in qua sit depicta imago Crucifixi.*' Two years later this declaration was confirmed, and in 1335, in order to maintain uniformity throughout the Order, the General Chapter again declared: '*ut, omni tempore, sumatur pax sicut in Domo Carthusiae* [i.e., the Grande Chartreuse], viz.: *tabula in qua Crux sit vel imago Christi depicta.*' (Le Couteulx, *Annales Ord. Cart.*, VOL.II., p.388.)

For this information, and for valuable criticism of Arnold's general handling of details about the Carthusians, we are indebted to the Reverend Dom Andrew Gray, Procurator of St Hugh's Charterhouse, Horsham, Sussex.

Carthusians no organ music is allowed. In his final description, however, of the children beneath some 'old-world abbey wall,' he has them say:

The organ carries to our ear  
Its accents of another sphere.

There is no inconsistency here, to be sure; but the easy willingness of the poet to shift from his account of the Carthusians to that of another religious group subtly indicates how little concerned he is with the Carthusians as such. The Grande Chartreuse is but the symbol of a thought and belief which for him is no longer possible. In the back of his mind is, not the Chartreuse, but Rugby Chapel, with Dr. Arnold, and St. Mary's at Oxford, with Newman, 'gliding in the dim afternoon light through the aisles,' and 'breaking the silence with words and thoughts which were a religious music,—subtle, sweet, mournful.' The organ music, the appeal of 'the high altar's depth divine,' the flickering tapers, and the 'cloistral round' have doubtless some reference to the followers of Pusey, Keble, and the leaders of the Anglo-Catholic movement.

The whole poem should, in fact, be read with the background of the Oxford Movement in mind. It embodies Arnold's opinion of the ecclesiastical tendencies of the day and, in particular, of that which directed attention back to the ancient institutions and practices of the Church. These the poet regards as extinct. He is even incapable of believing that their adherents can defend their faith as intellectually acceptable in modern times. He is between two worlds, one dead, the other powerless to be born.

The twenty-third stanza, with its famous lines on Byron

and the 'pageant of his bleeding heart' is tempered by the more appreciative allusion in 'Memorial Verses.' The following stanza on Shelley is unquestionably the result of Arnold's eighth entry in his list of poems to compose in 1849 (see above, pp.14-15): 'Shelley—Spezzia—ah an eternal grief. The Alexandrian pessimism.'

## STANZAS IN MEMORY OF THE AUTHOR OF "OBERMANN"

NOVEMBER, 1849

The 'Stanzas in Memory of the Author of "Obermann"' (in 1855 entitled simply 'Obermann') were first printed in *Empedocles on Etna, and Other Poems*, 1852. No annotation was used for the poem, except a footnote to the stanza in which Wordsworth is first mentioned: 'Written in November, 1849.' In 1869 a note was added, explaining the reference to the 'abandoned baths' of line 5: 'The Baths of Leuk. This poem was conceived, and partly composed, in the valley going down from the foot of the Gemmi Pass towards the Rhone.'

The information about Senancour, first given in annotation provided for 'Obermann Once More' (*New Poems*, second edition, 1868) is as follows:

The author of *Obermann*, Étienne Pivert de Senancour, has little celebrity in France, his own country; and out of France he is almost unknown. But the profound inwardness, the austere sincerity, of his principal work, *Obermann*, the delicate feeling for nature which it exhibits, and the melancholy eloquence of many passages of it, have attracted and charmed some of the most remarkable spirits of this century, such as George Sand and Sainte-Beuve, and will probably always find a certain number of spirits whom they touch and interest.



Senancour was born in 1770. He was educated for the priesthood, and passed some time in the seminary of St. Sulpice; broke away from the Seminary and from France itself, and passed some years in Switzerland, where he married; returned to France in middle life, and followed thenceforward the career of a man of letters, but with hardly any fame or success. He died an old man in 1846, desiring that on his grave might be placed these words only: *Éternité, deviens mon asile!*<sup>1</sup>

The influence of Rousseau, and certain affinities with more famous and fortunate authors of his own day,—Chateaubriand and Madame de Staël,—are everywhere visible in Senancour. But though, like these eminent personages, he may be called a sentimental writer, and though *Obermann*, a collection of letters from Switzerland treating almost entirely of nature and of the human soul, may be called a work of sentiment, Senancour has a gravity and severity which distinguish him from all other writers of the sentimental school. The world is with him in his solitude far less than it is with them; of all writers he is the most perfectly isolated and the least attitudinising. His chief work, too, has a value and power of its own, apart from these merits of its author. The stir of all the main forces, by which modern life is and has been impelled, lives in the letters of *Obermann*; the dissolving agencies of the eighteenth century, the fiery storm of the French Revolution, the first faint promise and dawn of that new world which our own time is but now more fully bringing to light,—all these are to be felt, almost to be touched, there. To me, indeed, it will always seem that the impressiveness of this production can hardly be rated too high.

Besides *Obermann* there is one other of Senancour's works which, for those spirits who feel his attraction, is very interesting; its title is, *Libres Méditations d'un Solitaire Inconnu*.

<sup>1</sup> Arnold's uncertainty as to Senancour's burial place (II. 161ff.) was removed by Sainte-Beuve, who wrote to him on September 6, 1854: '*Vous ne savez peut-être pas que l'auteur, M. de Senancour, est mort il y a quelques années à Sèvres près Paris où on l'avait transporté. Il n'a eu à son enterrement que deux personnes, et on a gravé sur sa tombe ces mots qu'il avait indiqués: "Éternité, deviens mon asile"*' (Whitridge, *Unpublished Letters of M.A.*, p.68.)

Arnold's fuller discussion of Senancour is contained in an essay published in the *Academy*, October 9, 1869, and reprinted in the so-called *Essays in Criticism*, third series. There Arnold again shows that he had come to Senancour through George Sand and Sainte-Beuve—for Sainte-Beuve had attempted to set forth Obermann rather than René as the true exponent of the Romantic Movement. In this essay Arnold again stresses the qualities in 'Obermann' which were for him arresting and significant: 'his profound inwardness, his austere and sad sincerity, and his delicate feeling for nature.' This essay may indeed be consulted as the best and fullest comment upon the poem under consideration.

Senancour, with his 'bleak frankness,' had what Arnold admired in Empedocles—a desire to see his way, a determination not to enjoy the illusion of clarity in place of the reality. He too was haunted by St. Bernard's question, '*Bernarde, ad quid venisti?*,' and would accept no ready or comfortable answer.

Sainte-Beuve asserts that the pervading passion of Senancour—it was Arnold's too—was the passion for '*Permanence*.' Arnold liked this search for the ultimate secret—it is the old quest of 'The Scholar-Gipsy'—particularly when it was accompanied by the poetical emotion, the haunting melancholy, and the languor of its own uncertainty. The ennui and enervation it entailed was for him not so much a *mal du siècle* as a *fleuve profond* from which his own creative prompting rose. To be sure he later made war against low spirits and depression; but the advance made was in character and in the quality of his prose, not in his poetic temperament. In 'Obermann' Arnold found, in addition to his habitually informing mood,

those other qualities he prized in George Sand—a social passion, the spell of the ideal, and a lyric strain which animated even while it depressed him.

In a letter of November, 1848, Arnold wrote to Clough that he 'took up *Obermann*, and refuged myself with him in his forest against your *Zeit Geist*.' <sup>2</sup> This surely bespeaks earlier knowledge of Senancour. <sup>3</sup> (His heavily-marked copy of *Obermann* is the edition of 1840, with the preface by George Sand.) But it was in the autumn of 1849, when Arnold was in Switzerland, troubled by his own emotions about Marguerite, that he thought most upon 'the master of his wandering youth' and composed the first poem in his honour. Surely much of *Obermann's* appeal to Arnold must have come from the tender and personal association that Swiss scenes held for him.

The poem itself sets forth the conception of 'Obermann' that Arnold gives in his essay. *Obermann* shares with Wordsworth and Goethe the distinction of having attained, at least, to see his way. He is self-schooled, self-scanned, if not altogether self-secure. Like Empedocles, though religious by instinct, he has permitted no anthropomorphic delusions to possess him and cloud his view.

Curiously enough, as Arnold indicates in the twenty-fourth stanza of his poem, *Obermann's* dilemma is the dilemma of Empedocles:

Ah! two desires toss about  
The poet's feverish blood.  
One drives him to the world without,  
And one to solitude.

<sup>2</sup> *Letters to Clough*, p. 95.

<sup>3</sup> See the letter to Mr. Dunn of November 12, 1867, quoted later, in which Arnold says that he was twenty-five when he fell in with Senancour.

*Ainsi, voyant dans les choses des rapports qui n'y sont guère, et cherchant toujours ce que je n'obtiendrai jamais, étranger dans la nature réelle, ridicule au milieu des hommes, je n'aurai que des affections vaines; et soit que je vive selon moi-même, soit que je vive selon les hommes, je n'aurai dans l'oppression extérieure, ou dans ma propre contrainte, que l'éternel tourment d'une vie toujours réprimée et toujours misérable.*<sup>4</sup>

There constantly haunts Obermann, indeed, the fear that 'life' is escaping him—a familiar refrain in the poetry of Arnold.

*The glow, he cries, the thrill of life,  
Where, where do these abound?*

It has been well said that 'Obermann is the history of a soul which, in its quest for Truth, is continually substituting Desire as its real end. This dualism . . . leads him at one moment to regret emotions he has never indulged, and the next to long fiercely for their extinction. Torn between the exigencies of his sensibility and his reason he can find no satisfaction in renouncing either. The struggle is a painful and a weary one.'<sup>5</sup> So in his 'Obermann Once More,' the voice that addressed Arnold has as its vision of the ideal order one in which the *desire* of men is satisfied in harmony.

It is in this second poem, indeed, that Arnold really deals with Senancour's thought. The present poem is rather a sketch, chiefly to be remembered for the descrip-

<sup>4</sup> *Lettre IV*, p.26.

<sup>5</sup> Mrs. Sells, pp.44-5. The fullest treatment of the influence of Senancour on Arnold is to be found in Mrs. Sells's *Matthew Arnold and France*, 1934. Mrs. Sells may perhaps press Senancour's direct influence too persistently; but her general demonstration of his importance to Arnold is surely in the right direction.

tive touches with which true homage is paid to the writer who in the essay on Celtic Literature was to be cited for his rare gifts of 'natural magic.' The Alpine scenery of the poem continually reflects Senancour's own descriptions.

The stanzas describing the summer twilight in which Obermann sat,

Lake Leman's waters, far below!  
And watch'd the rosy light  
Fade from the distant peaks of snow;  
And on the air of night

Heard accents of the eternal tongue  
Through the pine branches play—

are particularly felicitous in creating the sights and moods of the French original. Thus Obermann, for example, in the third fragment, entitled '*De l'expression romantique, et du Ranz des Vaches*' writes:

*L'air est froid, le vent a cessé avec la lumière du soir; il ne reste que la lueur des neiges antiques, et la chute des eaux dont le bruissement sauvage, en s'élevant des abîmes, semble ajouter à la permanence silencieuse des hautes cimes, et des glaciers, et de la nuit.*<sup>6</sup>

And again:

*Et moi aussi j'ai des momens d'oubli, de force, de grandeur: j'ai des besoins démesurés; sepulchri immemor! Mais je vois les momumens des générations effacées; je vois le caillou soumis à la main de l'homme, et qui existera cent siècles après lui. J'abandonne les soins de ce qui passe, et ces pensées du présent déjà perdu. Je m'arrête étonné; j'écoute ce qui subsiste encore; je voudrais entendre ce qui subsistera: je cherche dans le mouvement de la forêt, dans le bruit des pins, quelques-uns des accens de la langue éternelle.*<sup>7</sup>

6 *Troisième fragment*, p.164.

7 *Lettre XLVIII*, p.265.

The 'bells of the high-pasturing kine' are heard frequently in *Obermann*, notably in the third fragment just cited and in *Lettre LIX*, where '*On entendait à une grande distance les grosses cloches des vaches qui montaient au Kousin-berg.*'

The truly haunting sound for Obermann, however, is that of the lonely torrent in some distant abyss. It is a sound merely mentioned in this poem (stanza 9); but in 'Obermann Once More' Arnold makes a dramatic and artistic use of it, the significance of which is appreciated only by one who knows its full implication for Senancour. In the second poem, the vision of Obermann has ended. Darkness lies round; only the peak of Jaman stands in the 'yet star-sown nightly sky.'

I awoke  
As out of sleep, and no  
Voice moved;—only the torrent broke  
The silence, far below.

This last is a symbol for Obermann. '*Le torrent . . . subsistait dans sa force, s'écoulant, mais s'écoulant toujours, à la manière des siècles. La fuite de l'eau est comme la fuite de nos années. On l'a beaucoup redit, mais dans plus de mille ans on le redira: le cours de l'eau restera, pour nous, l'image la plus frappante de l'inexorable passage des heures. Voix du torrent au milieu des ombres, seule voix solennelle sous la paix des cieux, sois seule entendue.*'<sup>8</sup> So, '*on discerne le roulement du torrent caché dans les précipices qu'il s'est creusés durant de longs siècles.*'<sup>9</sup> And, again, Obermann

<sup>8</sup> *Lettre XC*, p. 501.

<sup>9</sup> *Troisième fragment*, p. 163.

tells of a mountain picnic in the pleasant society of his friends: *'Aujourd'hui le site était trop beau. Notre salle pittoresque, notre foyer rustique, un goûter de fruits et de crème, notre intimité momentanée, le chant de quelques oiseaux, et le vent qui à tout moment jetait dans nos tasses des feuilles de sapin, c'était assez; mais le torrent dans l'ombre, et les bruits éloignés de la montagne, c'était beaucoup trop: j'étais le seul qui entendit.'*<sup>10</sup>

Here was something not in Wordsworth, not even in Goethe. As much as any stoic honesty, it was this *senti-ment* that drew Arnold to Obermann. As for the heightening and peculiar use of Obermann's thought—that was to be treated nearly twenty years later, in 'Obermann Once More.'

The poem was translated into French prose, and used by Sainte-Beuve in his *Chateaubriand et son groupe littéraire*, 1861. Arnold is there cited as one of the devotees of Senancour:

*N'exagérons pas le malheur. M. de Sénancour a vécu en homme de conscience et de vertu; il n'a pas eu la gloire, il a eu des amis, il a eu des admirateurs secrets, épars, mais religieux à leur manière et passionnés; il a sa postérité secrète qui lui restera fidèle. Un jeune poète anglais, fils d'un bien respectable père, et dont le talent réunit la pureté et la passion, M. Mathieu Arnold, voyageant en Suisse et y suivant la trace d'Oberman, lui a dédié un poème où il a évoqué tout son esprit et où, lui-même, à la veille de rentrer par devoir dans la vie active, il fait ses adieux au grand méditatif rêveur. Je donnerai ici ce poème parfaitement inconnu en France et dans une traduction que le poète a daigné avouer.*<sup>11</sup>

<sup>10</sup> Lettre LIX, p.313.

<sup>11</sup> VOL.I, p.355-6.

In a footnote, a letter of Arnold to Sainte-Beuve is quoted:

*«Le livre d'Oberman étant écrit en français, et l'idée que j'ai de lui se liant toujours dans ma pensée avec celle de la Suisse française, les Stances que j'ai dédiées à sa mémoire me semblent gagner beaucoup, en fait de couleur locale et de vérité, à être revêtues d'une forme française. Je vous assure qu'à présent je lis mon poème avec plus de plaisir dans votre traduction que dans l'original.» C'est ce que M. Arnold m'a fait l'honneur de m'écrire, et, tout en rabattant ce qu'il faut de ses politesses, je puis laisser louer une traduction qui est moins en effet de moi que d'un poète ami, M. Lacaussade.*

A second footnote (p.361) gives an account of Arnold's professional interests. At the end of the translation, Sainte-Beuve adds:

*Voilà pourtant, si je ne m'abuse, sur ce tombeau solitaire qui est moins en effet aux bords de la Seine qu'au bord du Léman, une immortelle couronne funèbre.*

#### OBERMANN ONCE MORE

The second of the poems in memory of Senancour appeared in the *New Poems* (1867). It was given the place of honour at the end of the book, and immediately followed 'Stanzas from the Grande Chartreuse.' It was a good deal altered in the second edition of *New Poems* (1868), and the long note on Senancour was then added. Arnold excluded the poem from the *Selections* (1878), but it was regularly reprinted in the collected editions.

Several visits to Switzerland had renewed for Arnold his thoughts of Obermann first set down in the poem of 1849. For example, in 1857 he had extended his itinerary from Lucerne to Zermatt in order to go by the Titlis and



Grimsel 'for Obermann's sake.'<sup>1</sup> The next year he and Theodore Walrond made Obermann's excursion to Aosta and the Great St. Bernard. It was doubtless the trip to the Continent in 1865, however, that led to the writing of 'Obermann Once More.' In September he was at Vevey<sup>2</sup> and saw that east end of the Lake of Geneva which Obermann had selected for his last dwelling, the chalet described in *Lettre* LXVIII. This visit sent him back to *Obermann* itself, first noted on his reading list for November 15, 1865, and then for some twenty days following. It appears again on January 20, 1866, and indicates the probable period in which the poem was composed.

The Arnold of 1865-6, however, was not the tormented young wanderer of 1849. Marriage and an assured if not congenial profession, increasing success as an educator and man of letters, and the well-wrung maturity of his own thought and character had given him a new and positive tone. The distant Alpine torrents might hold a music arresting and nostalgic, but these romantic sounds no longer were the ground of his life. He had become the intimate of Sainte-Beuve and his circle in Paris, the Professor of Poetry at Oxford, the apostle of a new civilization in England. Society was in march, and there was now less time to think of that '*qui console du regret d'un monde.*' Arnold's stoicism had always been a little more exhilarating and highly-coloured than stoicism ought to be. The powerful spirit of Dr. Arnold was for ever dealing with René and his like, and making even Epictetus and Marcus Aurelius greater than they knew. The key to Arnold's

<sup>1</sup> *Letters* I.57.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, I.299.

youth, as much as any other, is the recognition of that powerful *Nachschein* of Christianity which warmed his most austere and pagan thoughts. It was now, indeed, more than a mere afterglow, for his own religious system had long been forming and was soon to be fully set forth. Moreover, he had written as early as 1856: 'To make a habitual war on depression and low spirits, which in one's early youth one is apt to indulge and be somewhat interested in, is one of the things one learns as one gets older. They are noxious alike to body and mind, and already partake of the nature of death.'<sup>3</sup> Strikingly enough, this very quotation from *Obermann* is at the beginning of his note-book for 1866 and reappears many times thereafter: '*La destination de l'homme est d'accroître le sentiment de la joie, de féconder l'énergie expansive, et de combattre, dans tout ce qui sent, le principe de l'avilissement et des douleurs.*'<sup>4</sup>

And yet men have such need of joy!  
But joy whose grounds are true;  
And joy that should all hearts employ  
As when the past was new.

The vision of *Obermann* which comes now twenty years after to Arnold in the evening above the Lake of Geneva is an *Obermann redivivus*. His discourse falls into three parts: (1) the account of the coming and decline of Christianity in the pagan world; (2) the account of the failure of the French Revolution, which Arnold had just carefully analysed in his essay on 'The Function of Criticism'

<sup>3</sup> *Letters* I. 52.

<sup>4</sup> *Lettre* XXXVIII, p. 158.

(1865); and (3) the hope of a new order both for man and for society. It is this last positive vision which gives point to the poem. Obermann's suggestion is the old command of the Scholar-Gipsy recalled for Thyrsis:

Roam on! The light we sought is shining still.

As he looked forward to

*One common wave of thought and joy  
Lifting mankind again!*

he was announcing what was already in Arnold's heart. In 1866 Arnold characteristically appropriates the thought which best suits him and he heightens it in his own way. It is the theme and temper of George Sand—her *Lettres d'un Voyageur* had been read in the *Revue des Deux Mondes* in 1864—and of Renan particularly, and of all the other 'dawnists,' as they have been scornfully called, with whom Arnold held undeniable affinity to the end of his life.

To be sure, the basis of this positive hope is to be found in Senancour. Whatever his personal ennui and distress, his voice is not without a strong and heartening tone. '*La résistance éveille l'âme et lui donne une attitude plus fière*';<sup>5</sup> '*Périssons en résistant.*' And this paragraph from *Lettre XLII* marked by Arnold in his own copy:

*La moralité de l'homme, et son enthousiasme, l'inquiétude de ses vœux, le besoin d'extension qui lui est habituel, semblent annoncer que sa fin n'est pas dans les choses fugitives; que son action n'est pas bornée aux spectres visibles; que sa pensée a pour objet les concepts nécessaires et éternels; que son affaire est de travailler à l'amélioration ou à la*

<sup>5</sup> *Lettre XLI*, p.172.

*réparation du monde; que sa destination est, en quelque sorte, d'élaborer, de subtiliser, d'organiser, de donner à la matière plus d'énergie, aux êtres plus de puissance, aux organes plus de perfection, aux germes plus de fécondité, aux rapports des choses plus de rectitude, à l'ordre plus d'empire.*<sup>6</sup>

The proper ordering of life—for a man's self and for society—can become a religion. '*La passion de l'ordre [Arnold marks the passage] occupe mieux, et produit bien plus que les autres passions.*'<sup>7</sup> '*L'ordre des choses idéales est comme un monde nouveau qui n'est point réalisé, mais qui est possible; le génie humain va y chercher l'idée d'une harmonie selon nos besoins, et rapporte sur la terre des modifications plus heureuses, esquissées d'après ce type surnaturel.*'<sup>8</sup>

Of considerable significance is the other quotation from *Obermann* which Arnold enters at the beginning of his note-book for 1866 and repeats in many succeeding years. Senancour admits that immortality may be a fond illusion; '*mais la tendance à l'ordre ne peut-elle faire une partie essentielle de nos inclinations, de notre instinct, comme la tendance à la conservation, à la reproduction?*'<sup>9</sup>

It is this quotation—not the one which Arnold puts at the head of the poem—that is really the text for 'Obermann Once More.' This is really what Obermann has said as he slips away and morning breaks—it is more than a symbol—across the 'Valais-depth profound' ('*les longues profondeurs du Valais*').<sup>10</sup>

As Obermann appears to Arnold in shepherd's garb,

6 *Lettre XLII*, p.194.

7 *Lettre LXXII*, p.405.

8 *Lettre LXXVIII*, p.420-21.

9 *Lettre XLIV*, p.216.

10 *Lettre VII*, p.48.

A mountain-flower was in his hand,  
A book was in his breast.

The symbolism is, in the light of Senancour's own work, more than a propos. *Obermann* is full of the meaning of flowers.<sup>11</sup> One March morning in Paris he found a daffodil blooming upon a wall. '*C'est la plus forte expression du désir: c'était le premier parfum de l'année. Je sentis tout le bonheur destiné à l'homme. Cette indicible harmonie des êtres, le fantôme du monde idéal fut tout entier dans moi; jamais je n'éprouvai quelque chose de plus grande et de si instantané.*'<sup>12</sup>

What of the book he carries? Is it not the good news that had been proffered him later that same spring at Paris, when at the *Bibliothèque* a companion-reader handed him a moral and philosophical fragment, attributed to Aristippus, spoken of by Varro, and supposedly lost? It is called the 'Manuel de Pseusophanes.' *Obermann* reprints it and Arnold marked practically all of it in his own copy. *Obermann's* address to Arnold is the message of hope contained in the manual. Strong and courageous, it tells man to fear not though all about him is in ferment. It bids him place all his faith in that intelligence which is the order of the world; '*Ne songe qu'à l'intelligence, qui est le principe de l'ordre du monde, et à l'homme, qui en est l'instrument: à l'intelligence qu'il faut suivre, à l'homme qu'il faut aider. . . . Tu es intelligence et matière. Le monde n'est pas autre chose. L'harmonie modifie les corps, et le tout tend à la perfection par l'amélioration perpétuelle de ses diverses parties. Cette loi de l'univers est aussi la loi des individus.*'<sup>13</sup>

<sup>11</sup> For example, *Lettre xxxvii*, p.149 and the closing paragraphs, *Lettre xci*, p.517-19.

<sup>12</sup> *Lettre xxx*, p.115.

<sup>13</sup> *Lettre xxxiii*, p.122,123-4.

And again from the 'Manuel': '*Il n'y a pas d'autre morale pour nous que celle du cœur de l'homme; d'autre science ou d'autre sagesse que la connaissance de ses besoins, et la juste estimation des moyens de bonheur.*'<sup>14</sup>

Then the social ideal: '*Console, éclaire, et soutiens tes semblables: ton rôle a été marqué par la place que tu occupes dans l'immensité de l'être vivant. Connais et suis les lois de l'homme, et tu aideras les autres hommes à les connaître, à les suivre. Considère et montre-leur le centre et la fin des choses; qu'ils voient la raison de ce qui les surprend, l'instabilité de ce qui les trouble, le néant de ce qui les entraîne.*' . . . '*Ne t'isole point de l'ensemble du monde; re-garde toujours l'univers, et souviens-toi de la justice. Tu auras rempli ta vie, tu auras fait ce qui est de l'homme.*'<sup>15</sup>

This is the 'good news,' the clue to Obermann's vision of 'joy in widest commonalty spread.' This joy it is which is to

fill that deep desire,  
The want which rack'd our brain,  
Consumed our heart with thirst like fire,  
Immedicable pain. . . .

This stanza is often suggested in *Obermann* itself. Arnold marks, indeed, the eloquent passage in *Lettre XXI*: '*Ce désir que réveillait en moi chaque sentiment de quelque beauté dans les choses naturelles, cette espérance pleine d'incertitude et de charme, ce feu céleste qui éblouit et consume un cœur jeune, cette volupté expansive dont il éclaire devant lui le fantôme immense, tout cela n'est déjà plus,*'<sup>16</sup> and this, '*Quand la*

<sup>14</sup> *Lettre XXXIII*, p. 124.

<sup>15</sup> *Lettre XXXIII*, p. 124, 125.

<sup>16</sup> *Lettre XXI*, p. 90.

*passion de toutes choses, quand ce besoin universel des âmes fortes a consumé nos cœurs, le charme abandonne nos désirs déçus, et l'irréparable ennui naît de ces cendres refroidies.*'<sup>17</sup>

To the general reader, however, the striking part of 'Obermann Once More' has been stanzas 21-47, describing the birth of Christianity in the pagan world of two thousand years ago, the unction it substituted for the disgust and satiety of the Roman noble, the hearts it commanded, and then the fading away of belief in Christ:

Now he is dead! Far hence he lies  
In the lorn Syrian town;  
And on his grave, with shining eyes,  
The Syrian stars look down.

Surely here is one of Arnold's warmest and most deeply felt productions. Mr. Binyon in his *Golden Treasury of Modern Lyrics* (1924) has even printed the section out of its context. Less impassioned and less personal in its expression, it is, none the less, like the 'Easter Day' of Arthur Clough and Arnold's own 'Stanzas from the Grande Chartreuse,' the lament of the nineteenth century for a faith that is gone. If there seems a marked heightening in these stanzas, little wonder; for no poem of Arnold's issued from a deeper background.

In the early 'fifties, largely under the influence of Spinoza, Arnold had begun to work out for himself a modified version of the Christian belief. By 1866 this work was well advanced and he was ready to begin in earnest that re-statement of religion for himself and for his countrymen

that was to occupy the next several years of his life. For some years already—particularly in the 'sixties—he had been augmenting his habitual reading of the Bible and Thomas à Kempis with a host of writers on religion. St. Francis of Assisi, Ozanam, St. Augustine, Frederick Robertson, Tauler, Lacordaire, Dante, Montalembert, Joubert, the De Guérins, Bishop Wilson, Alexandre Vinet, Réville, the Abbé Migne, Bossuet, the various contributors to the *Revue des Deux Mondes*—these were only part of his list. In 1863 he had read Morison's *Life and Times of St. Bernard*; in the same year, Renan's *Life of Jesus*; in 1866 he was finishing Renan's *Averroès* and *Les Apôtres*.

Moreover, the contrast between the hopelessness and sterility of the pagan world and the leaven of Christianity had always powerfully impressed him. In his recently published volume of *Essays in Criticism* he had pointed the contrast several times: in the essay on Marcus Aurelius, in that on Heine, and particularly in 'Pagan and Mediæval Religious Sentiment,' to which stanzas 21-47 of 'Obermann Once More' were to form the natural and effective pendant.

His reading of the classics reinforced the theme. *Obermann* was reread along with Propertius and Tibullus. Lucretius, long in Arnold's mind, had been presented anew in Sellar's *Roman Poets*, read in 1863. Sellar himself quotes the typical haunting refrain of Book III.912-15:

*Hoc etiam faciunt ubi discubere tenentque  
pocula saepe homines et inumbrant ora coronis,  
ex animo ut dicant 'brevis hic est fructus homullis;  
iam fuerit neque post umquam revocare licebit.'*



And the reading of Bossuet and Augustine would have again reminded him that, in the eye of sacred history, this very Roman world of Lucretius had come into being in order that out of it Christianity might spring. Moreover, as if to make the impression complete, Arnold had spent part of the year 1865 in Rome, visiting the Christian churches set against the pagan ruins. 'Tristram and Iseult' was composed out of a slender hint from a French magazine; but these stanzas of 'Obermann Once More' are long matured, and arise with a 'grand style' of their own from a store-house of reading and meditation. They are, indeed, a development of this rough outline contained in the Yale Manuscript:

The Roman world perished for having disobeyed reason and nature.

The infancy of the world was renewed with all its sweet illusions but infancy and its illusions must for ever be transitory, and we are again in the place of the Roman world, our illusions past, debtors to the service of reason & nature.

O let us beware how we again are false to them: we shall perish, and the world will be renewed: but we shall leave the same question to be solved by a future age.

I cannot conceal from myself the objection which really wounds & perplexes me from the religious side is that the service of reason is freezing to feeling, chilling to the religious moods.

& feeling & the religious mood are eternally the deepest being of man, the ground of all joy & greatness for him.

Of course, Obermann himself, for all his mistrust of religious illusion, deplores the loss of Christianity; as in *Lettre XLIV* (218-19) for example, where he analyses Rome and the Christian faith. Again in *Lettre XLIII* (205-06): '*La religion finit toutes ces anxiétés.*'

Probably the best comment upon the poem and its religious implications is contained in Arnold's unpublished letter to Mr. Henry Dunn, of November 12, 1867:

You, like one or two of the religious newspapers which I have seen,<sup>18</sup> appear to assume that I merely use Empedocles and Obermann as mouthpieces through which to vent my own opinions. This is not so. . . .

Senancour, the author of Obermann, was a French writer of the beginning of this century, too melancholy and too much without a direct aim to be popular, but who, from his gravity sincerity and feeling for nature, produced on me when I happened, at 25, to fall in with his works, an extraordinary impression. My separation of myself, finally, from him and his influence, is related in a poem in my Second Series, now out of print:—a poem as well known as the generality of my poems are, whether that be much or little. Senancour looked on the old religion of Christendom much as other enthusiasts of the French Revolution looked at it; he was, however, profoundly religious, and when the world consolidated itself again after the Revolution without a new religion, but with a patching up of the old in which he saw no permanence and no sincerity, 'his heart within him,' as the Psalmist says, 'became desolate.' I have given to his delineation of the old religion a fervour and a reverence which he would hardly have given to it, from my feeling of the depth of religious sentiment which was really in him. M. Sainte-Beuve writes to me from Paris: 'C'est un Obermann transfiguré.' I cherish very great sympathy for Senancour. But even transfigured he retains, because I meant him to be true to the reality, an

<sup>18</sup> In a letter to his mother four days later (*Letters* I.375), Arnold wrote: 'I am to meet Swinburne at dinner on Monday. . . . He expresses a great desire to meet me, and I should like to do him some good, but I am afraid he has taken some bent. His praise has, as was natural, inclined the religious world to look out in my writings for a crusade against religion, and the *Contemporary Review*, the *Christian World*, and other similar periodicals, fix on the speeches of Empedocles and Obermann, and calmly say, dropping all mention of the real speakers, "Mr. Arnold here professes his Pantheism," or "Mr. Arnold here disowns Christianity." However, the religious world is in so unsettled a state that this sort of thing does not do the harm it would have done two years ago. Meanwhile nearly 1000 copies of my poems are gone, which is very well.'

aridity and crudity in his language which savours of the French Revolution and its vehemence of negation and opposition, and which certainly, were I writing directly for myself, would not be mine.

That Christ is alive is language far truer to my own feeling and observation of what is passing in the world, than that Christ is dead.

The final interest, however, of 'Obermann Once More' lies in what it tells us of Arnold himself, for it is really a piece of unconscious autobiography. It clearly marks a two-fold transition in the poet's life. First of all, there is the evidence—though rigorously repressed in the poem, as it should be—of that relatively new conviction about Christianity which was now to form the centre of Arnold's life. At least this much may be fairly said: the wandering between two worlds was over. In the second place, the poem is a monument to Arnold's transition from poetry to prose. The break was now clearly made, and this poem quietly attests the reasons.

However much it may at times seem otherwise, the real roots of Arnold's poetry—at least of his power to create poetry—lay not in what was classic and certain and positive, but in what was tentative and romantically obscure. The finish of his poetry and its architecture were classical, as were the limits he put upon it; but its breath and engendering spirit were not. His verses often attained to a statement of what he believed, but they began in what he doubted. His songs arose from what in life was fleeting and lovely, and therefore melancholy and emotional—from the prospect of men set amid beauty and tenderness, looking for some fugitive and gracious light that lost itself

among the shadows of uncertain death. Classicist as he was, he knew this secret in his heart. He deploras 'The Scholar-Gipsy' to Clough because it does not *animate* men, but merely adds 'zest to their melancholy or grace to their dreams.' And this aptitude for 'pleasing melancholy,' he goes on to say, 'is the basis of my nature—and of my poetics.'<sup>19</sup>

The Obermann of 1849 had addressed himself to a poet; the ghostly figure of 1866 spoke to a man of affairs—a writer of distinguished prose, a growing figure in a nation's life, a man who had found at least the peace that comes with a vocation. And his vocation—one must make bold to say it—was no less than the task of civilizing his fellow countrymen and setting up for them a new religion! For Arnold himself the gain must have been great, in spite of his regret that he no longer had leisure for poetry. By the force of his own character and by the enchantment of his own activity he had conquered the *mal du siècle*. But he had forsaken the ground out of which his poetry had always sprung, even when it rose to be most glorious and exhilarating. All too ready is he to receive Obermann's vision of a new world, that vision—to use his cherished words from George Sand—of man's ideal life, which is but another name for man's normal life as it might some day be. For him this new life meant distinguished service to his own time and the production of some of the best and most positive prose-criticism ever written in English. But as the shade of Obermann silently disappeared in the early morning, another ghost went with it. Is it too much to say that it was the ghost of a poet? There was left

19 *Letters to Clough*, p. 146.

upon the slopes above Geneva a disciplined and less distracted man, for whom the world was now in making. He was to speak out as he had never spoken—with increasing force and increasing clarity. But no longer could he say with Obermann and the generation he had now outgrown: *‘J’aime les chants dont je ne comprends point les paroles.’*

On December 27, 1866, three days after he was forty-four, he wrote to his mother: ‘Forty-four is indeed an age at which one may say “The time past of our life may suffice us” to have trifled and idled, or worse, in. I more and more become conscious of having something to do, and of a resolution to do it.’

He wrote in his diary his last entry for the next year: ‘Until the day dawn, and the day-star arise in your hearts!’

## DRAMATIC POEMS



## MEROPE

THIS attempt to present 'a Greek tragedy in the English language' was first published in 1858 in a separate volume. It was not reprinted until 1885, when it was used, with some alterations, in Arnold's collected works, VOL.III, *Dramatic and Later Poems*. It reappeared in the edition of 1888 and thereafter.

In the first edition Arnold included a long preface and a historical introduction. The preface was not reprinted by him in 1885 or thereafter. (It did appear, however, in the 'Oxford Poets' edition of Arnold, 1913, and in John Churton Collins's edition of *Merope*, Oxford, 1906. It is Arnold's own best 'editing' of his poem. He there fully explains his purpose, the choice of his subject, his sources, the problems of making an English tragedy seem Greek, and his reasons for not preparing instead an English translation of some extant Greek tragedy; he also gives an analysis of former treatments of the Merope story by Maffei, Voltaire, and Alfieri, and discusses Goethe's *Iphigenia* and Milton's *Samson Agonistes*. The remarks upon the chorus in *Samson* emphasize Arnold's belief that he, not Milton, was the first to attempt a reflection of the Greek tragic spirit in a strictly Greek form.

Arnold's experiment was, of course, the not unnatural fruit of his life-long interest in Greek literature. 'Sohrab and Rustum' in 1853 and 'Balder Dead' a few months later had reflected Homer. There were his choruses from an 'Antigone' and a 'Dejaneira.' He now turned to the tragic dramatists again. His note-book for November and December, 1856, shows him 'at Merope.' In December he



enters on his reading list Sophocles' *Electra*, Voltaire's *Mérope*, Aeschylus' *Choephoræ* and Goethe's *Iphigenia*, Alfieri's *Merope*, and Milton's *Samson*.

His work must have lasted well into the following year, because in September he is still 'at Merope.' His reading list for the year clearly shows his preparation both for the play and for the preface. In January, for example, Goethe's *Iphigenia*, Milton's *Samson*, and Alfieri again appear on his list; in February, Voltaire's prefaces; in March, Grote's *History of Greece*; in May, Sophocles' *Ajax* and Alfieri. For June and the two following months there are no entries; but in September he is still hard at his task, reading *The Women of Trachis*, Pausanias—on whom he drew heavily for local colour—, and Apollodorus; in October, Sophocles' *Œdipus*, Clinton on the ancient Greek poets, Callimachus, Fabricius on Sophocles, Rigault's *Querelle des anciens et modernes*, and Müller's *History of Greek Literature*; in November, Müller and Grote are continued, along with Aristotle's *Poetics*. In December, he again studies the *Poetics* and Voltaire's prefaces—doubtless in relation to his own introduction. It is not our purpose to detail the specific borrowings made from this long and varied list.

Stimulus to the work on 'Merope' had doubtless been furnished by Arnold's election as Professor of Poetry at Oxford on May 5, 1857. His inaugural lecture given in the next term was, significantly enough, 'The Modern Element in Literature,' with its laudation of Sophocles and his contemporaries, upon whom Arnold had been working for 'Merope' and whose form and spirit he was now trying to display. On July 25, 1857, he wrote his sister,

Mrs. Forster: 'I am well in the middle of my *Merope*, and please myself pretty well, though between indolence and nervousness I am a bad worker. What I learn in studying Sophocles for my present purpose is, or seems to me, wonderful; so far exceeding all that one would learn in years' reading of him without such a purpose. And what a man! What works! I must read *Merope* to you. I think and hope it will have what Buddha called the "character of *Fixity*, that true sign of the Law." ' <sup>1</sup>

With the appearance of the poem, Arnold begins his defence of it in letters to his family. On January 3, 1858, he sends clippings from reviewers, who, he says, 'have lost no time in opening cry.' He is struck by 'what irritation the dispute between classicism and romanticism seems always to call forth.' <sup>2</sup>

On January 11 he wrote to his brother-in-law, W. E. Forster, <sup>3</sup> a long letter about the poem. He admits that the subject rather frightens the public and quotes a letter from Miss Müller: 'John Bull would admire *Merope* if he dared—but he is a shy fellow afraid of making false quantities and of exposing himself—and so he looks askance at it.'

Arnold goes on to discuss specific points raised by Forster. He defends his reference to the Aroanian stream, 'whose trout are vocal;' <sup>4</sup> he holds that, if '*Merope*' is not

<sup>1</sup> *Letters* I. 57.

<sup>2</sup> He refers particularly to a review in the *Athenæum* for January 2, 1858, and another in the *Spectator* for January 3.

<sup>3</sup> Whitridge, *Unpublished Letters*, p. 35.

<sup>4</sup> Arnold writes, 'Pausanias [viii. 21] says that when he came to Cleitor in his tour through Arcadia he passed a summer evening on the river-bank waiting to hear them begin. I need not say he was disappointed. Generally speaking, the history, topography & natural history of *Merope* are faithful—that is so far as anything about Greece from one who has not seen it can be faithful.'

'exciting' in the ordinary sense, it does excite, nevertheless, that pity and fear—'say commiseration & awe and you will perhaps better feel what I mean'—which the Greeks admired. There are other points discussed in the letter, ending with this observation: 'The conflict of feelings in Merope's nature is what, I think, the tragedy turns upon—I think this would come out upon the stage, and this makes Merope the principal person. The most attractive, however, I certainly agree with you is Polyphontes.'

A letter also was sent to Mrs. Forster:

The poem is a tragedy according to the celebrated definition which has not yet, so far as I know, given place to a better—'Tragedy is the imitation of some action that is serious and entire, & of proper magnitude, effecting through pity and fear the purification of these feelings of the soul.'

The more you look at that famous definition (Aristotle's) the better you will like it. . . .

It is true that Polyphontes is the most interesting personage, I think, though I suppose Merope ought to be. It is doubtful whether in the stasimon the chorus do not philosophize too much for their age and sex—I felt the difficulty and showed I felt it at the point you have observed. It is to be said that the characters in tragedy of this sort are in the highest degree idealized—so that each may be at the very summit of what it is naturally possible for them to attain to—maidens brought up in company with such a personage as Merope, and such solemn events, may well be allowed to have risen to the best feeling and thinking of their sex—but they must not transcend that. Whether my Messenians do or not, I cannot quite determine. Think at any rate of Lady Jane Grey and such as her.

I think you will come to like the choruses—although this part of ancient tragedy is for modern readers, I well know, the doubtful part. . . .

You must remember that this form of drama is above all cal-

culated for the stage—a sort of opera-stage—and that as much as the Elizabethan drama loses by being acted the Greek drama gains.<sup>5</sup>

On January 18, to his mother:

I send you to-day two or three newspapers, none of them exactly favourable, but which you will perhaps like to see. In spite of the aversion of people to the unfamiliar stranger introduced to them, her appearance evidently makes them think and turn themselves about it; and this will do them good, while their disinclination will do me no harm, as their curiosity will make them buy *Merope*, and I have no intention of producing, like Euripides, seventy dramas in this style, but shall now turn to something wholly different.<sup>6</sup>

On February 3, to his sister Frances:

The *Leader* was very gratifying. . . . Had it [*Merope*] been one of my earlier volumes, I should have sent you a multitude of letters, but with this I soon got tired, seeing it was not going to take as I wished. Instead of reading it for what it is worth, everybody begins to consider whether it does not betray a design to substitute tragedies *à la Grecque* for every other kind of poetical composition in England, and falls into an attitude of violent resistance to such an imaginary design. What I meant them was to see in it a specimen of the world created by the Greek imagination. This imagination was different from our own, and it is hard for us to appreciate, even to understand it; but it had a peculiar power, grandeur, and dignity, and these are worth trying to get an apprehension of. But the British public prefer, like all obstinate multitudes, to 'die in their sins,' and I have no intention to keep preaching in the wilderness.

The book sells well, but it must be remembered that a good many people read it from curiosity. Temple writes me word that 'he has read it with astonishment at its goodness.'<sup>7</sup>

<sup>5</sup> Whitridge, pp.41-2; the date is simply '1858.'

<sup>6</sup> *Letters* I.58-9.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, I.59-60.

Again on February 9, to Mme du Quaire:

I hope by this time you have *Merope*. . . . I am anxious to explain to you that you are not the least bound to like her, as she is calculated rather to inaugurate my Professorship with dignity than to move deeply the present race of *humans*. No one is more sensible of this than I am, only I have such a real love for this form and this old Greek world that perhaps I infuse a little soul into my dealings with them which saves me from being entirely *ennuyeux*, professorial, and pedantic; still you will not find in *Merope* what you wish to find, and I excuse you beforehand for wishing to find something different, and being a little dissatisfied with me; and I promise you, too, to give you a better satisfaction some day, if I live. . . . Make Browning look at it, if he is at Florence; one of the very best antique fragments I know is a fragment of a Hippolytus by him. . . . The poem is a great deal reviewed here, very civilly, but very expostulatingly.<sup>8</sup>

Arnold did not regard 'Merope' as closet-drama, and he was determined to do everything possible to secure for it a popular audience. His boldest stroke was to come. On March 6, 1858, he wrote to Lady Martin, then Helena Faucit:

Madam,—I take the liberty of sending you a copy of a tragedy which I have lately published, with a view to ascertain whether it would be possible to induce you, were it brought upon the stage, to undertake the principal character.

In a tragedy of this kind, depending little for its success upon the complication of its stage-business, everything turns upon the nobleness, seriousness, and powers of feeling of the actor; and I would certainly make no attempt to get *Merope* represented unless I had a prospect of obtaining the help of the artist who alone, in the present state of the English stage, seems to me to display these qualities in an eminent degree.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>8</sup> *Letters* I.60-61.

<sup>9</sup> Sir Theodore Martin, *Helena Faucit*, Edinburgh and London, 1900, p.256.

According to Sir Theodore Martin, 'Merope was carefully read, and Miss Faucit wrote in reply, pointing out some of the difficulties which she saw would stand in the way of its success on the stage. . . . They [Arnold and the actress] accordingly met, when, I believe, her reasons satisfied him that, while she might personally have pleasure in acting the part of Merope, it would not be advisable to put his drama to the more than doubtful test of a public representation. At all events she heard no more of his wish.'<sup>10</sup>

It is worth noting that the incomparable Rachel, of whom Arnold often must have thought while writing 'Merope,' had died on January 3, 1858, just after the poem had appeared.

About no other poem of his making does Arnold—either in preface or in letters—write at such length or in such detail or become so completely the 'Professor of Poetry.' No doubt his own belief in 'Merope' was occasioned, not merely by the sense of his experiment and the pleasure of the pioneer, but by his own genuine feeling for his subject and for his own manner of treating it.

But Arnold's pleasure has not been reflected in many readers, and the literary historian has catalogued 'Merope' as a 'distinguished failure.' As Professor Bush says, the anxious defence of the poem in the letters is 'despite its apparent confidence, the fondness of a mother for a subnormal child.'<sup>11</sup> The very restraints Arnold put round himself, his austere limitation, his faithful adherence

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., pp 256-7. We are greatly indebted to Mr. John C. Guthrie, who has been making a study of Arnold and the drama, for discovering and for offering to let us print here this arresting story. It is material which has apparently eluded students of Arnold.

<sup>11</sup> *Mythology and the Romantic Tradition*, p.262.

to the Sophoclean style in his choruses resulted in a poem which may have taught valuable lessons about the Greek temper but which seemed only wooden and dull to readers who were later to revel in the lush choruses of Swinburne.<sup>12</sup> Far more than 'Sohrab' or 'Balder,' 'Merope' really illustrates the *architectonicé* and the strictures against 'fine writing' laid down in the Preface of 1853. But, as Arnold knew well enough, the English poets had 'Shakespearized for three hundred years'; and they were not going to deny their tradition for the most immaculate classic imitation from Oxford. What they were to learn from Arnold of the Greek spirit they were to learn from his other and much less self-conscious poems.

In its own way, 'Merope' has some arresting virtues. A fine Sophoclean irony, some noble and lofty rhetoric, a certain pathos and humanity given to Merope's own character, an atmosphere of old ancestral crime that Aristotle might have understood, Arnold's usual talent for resounding proper names and local colour—these are effective. The defect of the poem is Arnold's failure to adhere to Aristotle's favoured 'single, unhappy issue.' After the exciting discovery scene between the queen and her son and the averting of a central tragedy, we are asked—in spite of Arnold's insistence that Merope and her shifting emotions are the main affair—to transfer our sympathy to Poly-

<sup>12</sup> On May 17, 1865 Arnold wrote to John Conington, Professor of Latin at Oxford: 'Swinburne's poem [*Atalanta in Calydon*] is as you say: the moderns will only have the antique on the condition of making it more *beautiful* (according to their own notions of beauty) than the antique: i.e. something wholly different. You were always good to "Merope," and I think there is a certain solidity in her composition, which makes her look as well now as five years ago—a great test. The chorus rhythms are unsatisfactory, I admit, but I cannot yet feel that rhyme would do.' (*Letters* I.264.)

phontes and to regard him as the central problem. This dual interest spoils 'Merope' and the only real unity that Aristotle ever demanded—that is, the unity of action.

Moreover, 'Merope' lacks a genuine tragic hero, in whose profound suffering we experience some new and relieving sense of man's woe and man's majesty. Arnold tries to make such a 'hero' out of Polyphontes, but he does not succeed. Polyphontes does, truly enough, emerge as 'a man not wholly good, nor wholly bad'—it is Arnold's particular 'improvement' over his predecessors. He has a kind of *'αμαρτία'*. But he does not attain tragic grandeur or that moving and ennobling condition of men who when they die have, as a modern critic has said, 'something besides their life to lose.' From the central scene between Merope and Æpytus—the one scene in the Merope story which both the ancients and the moderns found worthy of remembering—Polyphontes, the 'hero,' is absent! And the force of all that follows in the play is, in spite of all Arnold did to save it, a diminuendo. It is as if Banquo were expected to furnish the thrill of awe which seals *Macbeth*.

In the summer of 1859, Arnold was in Paris associating with that circle of French critics whose praise was for him the final crown. He wrote to his wife on August 21: 'Villemain brought out *Merope*, which he likes, naturally, more than the English do.' A prophet is for ever without honour, and consolations such as these were the only reward for his most pretentious effort. Joined to his own well-nourished belief that he was right, they were perhaps enough.



## EMPEDOCLES ON ETNA

'Empedocles on Etna' was first published in the volume of 1852, to which it furnished the title; but Arnold excluded the poem from the edition of 1853, and did not revive it again until the publication of the *New Poems* of 1867, when he announced that he reprinted it 'at the request of a man of genius, whom it had the honour and the good fortune to interest,—Mr. Robert Browning.' In this volume it was once more given the leading position. Many readers of Browning have probably made comparison between Browning's *Paracelsus* (1835), and Arnold's *Empedocles*. The two, however different in spirit and result, are cast in the dramatic form, interspersed with conspicuous lyric passages, and deal with the most important issues of life.

Although Arnold excluded the drama from the edition of 1853—from which it was his intention to omit all pieces of an experimental nature or of inferior merit—he admitted to its pages a lyric of irregular structure and rhyme, entitled 'Cadmus and Harmonia,'<sup>1</sup> which careful readers at once recognized as a song of Callicles, near the end of Act I of 'Empedocles on Etna.' Throughout his life this remained one of the author's favourite pieces, and, like the other lyrics of Callicles, was permitted to remain practically unaltered.

When the Second Series of *Poems* was published in 1855, Arnold revived the other four lyrics of Callicles under the general title of 'The Harp-Player on Etna.' The parts

1 For a detailed treatment of sources of the several songs of Callicles, see Bush, *Mythology and the Romantic Tradition*, pp.256-7.

were called respectively, 'The Last Glen' (beginning, 'The track winds down to the clear stream,' and ending 'And all the wisdom of his race'), 'Typho,' 'Marsyas,' and 'Apollo.' This last is the final lyric of the drama, and has survived as the most popular part of the poem, and is, indeed, one of Arnold's most famous lyrics. In the *Selections* of 1878, he entitled this 'Apollo Musagetes.'

In his pencilled notes for poems to be composed in 1849, Arnold has listed: 'Empedocles—refusal of limitation by the religious sentiment.' In the summer of that same year J. Campbell Shairp wrote to Arthur Hugh Clough, 'I saw the said Hero—Matt—the day I left London. He goes in Autumn to the Tyrol with Slade. He was working at an "Empedocles"—which seemed to be not much about the man who leapt in the crater—but his name & outward circumstances are used for the drapery of his own thoughts. I wish Matt w<sup>d</sup> give up that old Greek form but he says he despises all the modern ways of going about the art & will stick to his own one. Also I do not believe in nor feel with that great background of fatalism or call it what you will which is behind all his thought. But he thinks he sees his way.'<sup>2</sup>

There is, however, another letter, at present unpublished, which also concerns the composition of 'Empedocles.' It is that written by Arnold on November 12, 1867, to Mr. Henry Dunn.

You, like one or two of the religious newspapers which I have seen, appear to assume that I merely use Empedocles and Obermann as mouthpieces through which to vent my own opinions. This is not so. Empedocles was composed fifteen years ago, when I had

<sup>2</sup> Clough MSS.

been much studying the remains of the early Greek religious philosophers, as they are called; he greatly impressed me and I desired to gather up and draw out as a whole the hints which his remains offered. Traces of an impatience with the language and assumptions of the popular theology of the day may very likely be visible in my work, and I have now, and no doubt had still more then, a sympathy with the figure Empedocles presents to the imagination; but neither then nor now would my creed, if I wished or were able to draw it out in black and white, be by any means identical with that contained in the preachment of Empedocles.

No critic appears to remark that if Empedocles throws himself into Etna his creed can hardly be meant to be one to live by. If the creed of Empedocles were, as exhibited in my poem, a satisfying one, he ought to have lived after delivering himself of it, not died.<sup>3</sup>

Here are two seemingly contradictory pieces of evidence but it requires no particular insight to see that both are true. In the first place, Principal Shairp was quite right when he said that Empedocles was in a large measure Arnold himself. This fact is clear at the outset to anyone who knows the entire body of Arnold's work. If one were to call the meditations on the mountain merely a paraphrase of the ancient philosopher, then one must also take a cue from the Baconians and say that all the poems of Matthew Arnold were written by Empedocles. It has indeed been clear for some time that the fragments of Empedocles gave Arnold very little help. The life and thought of Empedocles himself furnished merely a frame-

3 Yale Papers. Mr. Frederick Page points out to us that Arnold here faintly anticipated Meredith's satire in his own brief 'Empedocles' (1892):

And this great Doctor, can it be  
He left no saner recipe  
For men at issue with despair?  
Admiring, even his poet owns,  
While noting his fine lyric tones,  
The last of hum was heels in air!

work for the poem and those 'hints' which Arnold mentions. Rather do we have the passionate, direct statements of a young man who is trying to find, as he expressed it in letters to Clough, some 'Idea of the world in order not to be prevailed over by the world's multitudinousness' and 'whose one natural craving is not for profound thoughts, mighty spiritual workings etc. etc. but a distinct seeing of my way as far as my own nature is concerned.'<sup>4</sup>

Arnold's principal source for Empedocles' own part in the poem was Simon Karsten's *Philosophorum Graecorum Veterum (praesertim qui ante Platonem Floruerunt) Operum Reliquiae*, 1830. This two-volume work is among Arnold's own books. Xenophanes, Parmenides, and Empedocles are there edited, with elaborate introductions by Karsten. It is the introduction to the fragments of Empedocles that gives Arnold practically all the salient facts for Act I, scene i. Two-and-a-quarter pages of notes for *Empedocles*, preserved in the library of Mr. Thomas J. Wise, are derived from these sources. It is clear, of course, that Arnold has drawn also upon Diogenes Laertius' lives of Empedocles and Parmenides. The prominence of Pausanias in Diogenes Laertius is worthy of note. The manuscript sketch for Arnold's poem opens with a suggestion of the wealthy family, the early life, and education of Empedocles. It continues:

Connected with the Pythagoræans.—Tho: rich, liberal in his politics: &, shortly after his father's death the aristocratical party intriguing considerably he struck such blows as the condemnation of the Clerk of the Council & his entertainer, the dissolution of the Council of 1000. He is said to have declined an offer of the

<sup>4</sup> *Letters to Clough*, pp.97,110.

tyranny. He was magnificently munificent: he dowered many dow-erless girls: he cleansed the Selinuntian malarious river by turning 2 neighbouring streams into it at his own expense: he stopped malarious chinks in the mountains near Agrigentum, *κωλυσανέμας*

—yet his manners were proud & imposing: he swam in a swelling consciousness of his superiority—"rejoiced my brother nobles," he says: "I come among you an immortal God, a mortal no longer:"—he wore purple & a golden circlet &c. continually, a severe countenance, long waving hair, & a train of servants followed him in his solemn rounds: the people stupidly admired him, both for his wealth & grandeur, & as a necromancer:

For he was a potent natural philosopher, skilled in medicine, & as such, wrought: he was a mighty speaker, the inventor of Rhetoric, Gorgias' master, who said he had seen him *γοητεύοντα*: a woman called Panthea, who had lain in a trance at Agrigentum 30 (or 7) days, he restored: he was a mighty musician, having by playing on his lyre restrained a young man who rushed into a company where he was in the intent to kill a judge who had condemned his father & was of that company.

—He travelled in the East, to Greece & Olympia where he claimed & received great attention, & recited as was said his *Καθαρμύι*. Returning to Sicily, he found the aristocrats uppermost at Agrigentum, the children of his early foes: he was repulsed [by] them & coming to Syracuse, abode in the house of Pisanax a wealthy man, on the side of the city nearest to Ætna. Pausanias son of Anchities, the famous physician, & his friend, followed him.

—In the end of his life character had begun to dwindle and the influence of the Sophists to extend itself among the Greeks. He is one of the last of the Orpheuslike religious philosophers. (420)<sup>5</sup>

5 The folded sheet on which these notes are written is of some interest as containing also the first, pencilled draft of 'Dover Beach,' and the following sentence, also written with a lead pencil, at the top of the first page: 'Man has an impulse for happiness: he sees something of it, hears traditions of much of it: he thinks therefore he *ought* to have it what is true is, he *may* have it if he *can*.'

This prose sentence is, plainly, related to the stanza quoted from the Yale MS (see p.292), and both are related to the 16th and 17th stanzas of Empedocles' long lyric as it was finally left by Arnold.

This sheet of notes is laid in a copy of *Empedocles on Etna*, 1852, which was

Act I, scene i of Arnold's version is here indicated clearly enough. But the ideas and main body of the poem are not furnished. There were in the fragments themselves—for Arnold's purpose—only some slight touches of the doctrine of the elements, a few hints about cosmogony, and something of Empedocles' 'sad lucidity of soul.' That is about all.

There is, however, in the Yale Papers a document far more significant than this sketch of outward facts derived from Karsten. It is Arnold's prose outline and summary of the poem he wanted to create. Written in ink on an ordinary folded sheet of note-paper, it fills both sides of the first leaf, as follows:

He is a philosopher.

He has not the religious consolation of other men, facile because adapted to their weaknesses, or because shared by all around and changing the atmosphere they breathe.

He sees things as they are—the world as it is—God as he is: in their stern simplicity.

The sight is a severe and mind-tasking one: to know the mysteries which are communicated to others by fragments, in parables.

But he started towards it in hope: his first glimpses of it filled him with joy: he had friends who shared his hope & joy & communicated to him theirs: even now he does not deny that the sight is capable of affording rapture & the purest peace.

But his friends are dead: the world is all against him, & incredulous of the truth: his mind is overtaken by the effort to hold fast so great & severe a truth in solitude: the atmosphere he breathes not being modified by the presence of human life, is too rare for him. He perceives still the truth of the truth [*sic*], but cannot be trans-

formerly the property of Mathilde Blind (1897), who is said to have had the book from D. G. Rossetti.

Certain phrases from the last paragraph of these notes are used in the preface of 1853.

Before he becomes the victim of depression & overtension of mind, to the utter deadness to joy, grandeur, spirit, and animated life, he desires to die; to be reunited with the universe, before by exaggerating his human side he has become utterly estranged from it.

The Yale MS. also contains two stanzas not used in the printed text, as follows:

Then wilt thou learn if not  
The clue to happiness  
At least that Gods thy lot  
Single not for distress

thwart      welfare

That natural causes mar thy efforts & not fate.

That each man's lot is that  
Which he can win or keep  
Nor does Heaven toil thereat  
To make him laugh or weep;  
Learn that men will not & gods cannot help thy state.

This outline rather supports Shairp's suspicion that Empedocles was simply Matthew Arnold. But in 1849 Matthew Arnold was a very complicated young man, full of bright plans and reading to complete them. It is an examination of these plans and his work upon them that shows the sources out of which 'Empedocles' really rose.

The same list of work for 1849 which reminds Arnold to finish 'Empedocles' is headed: 'Chew Lucretius.'<sup>6</sup> As early as 1845, according to his note-books, he had

6 See above, pp 11ff.





not overmuch  
 Not much thou knowst I prize  
     What pleasures may be had:  
     Who strive to see with eyes  
     Not eager, nor not sad  
 But then I say

These three stanzas, somewhat altered, became of course a part of 'Empedocles' (i.397-410).

Moreover, in verses which Arnold had written out for 'Lucretius' (see pp.340ff.), one sees merely another elaborate statement of certain striking images in 'Empedocles,' notably that of the soul of man conceived of as a mirror driven in space by the winds and reflecting from its thousand facets only the partial view of a multitudinous, unsatisfying life. The lines written out for Lucretius are these:

Thou mirror that hast danc'd through such a world  
 So manifold so fresh so brave a world  
 That hast so much reflected,——but alas  
 Retained so little in thy careless depths.<sup>9</sup>

We are here perhaps close to at least one reason why 'Lucretius' was never finished. The Roman tragedy, true enough, was to be bristling with action and history—Pompey and Caesar, even, were there to be brought to life. But there was also most certainly to be a meditative, philosophical centre to the play. And now Arnold's reading and thought upon it had passed into 'Empedocles on Etna;' when that was finished the horn was dry.

It is easy to see, at least, how much of *De Rerum Natura*

<sup>9</sup> MS. and see pp.345ff

has consciously or unconsciously gone to the making of 'Empedocles on Etna.' Lucretius is himself the masterful interpreter of Empedocles and his doctrine. Indeed Arnold's own statement of his theme, 'the refusal of limitation by the religious sentiment' is but another way of citing the famous and oft-repeated line from Lucretius:

*religionum animum nodis exsolvere pergo.*

According to Lucretius (v.1161ff.) man has been tempted to leave all to the gods who live at ease, has prostrated himself before them, and through fear merely intensified his own miseries—abandoning all effort *pacata posse omnia mente tueri*. Lucretius praises Epicurus for having defied religious superstitions when he found mankind grovelling before them. Most of the important themes of Empedocles' instruction to Pausanias are stressed at great length in *De Rerum Natura*: the vanity of luxuries and the contrast with the simple joys of outdoor life; <sup>10</sup> the reiteration that the gods have not arranged the world for man's benefit; <sup>11</sup> the working of nature without respect even to the gods; <sup>12</sup> the conviction that lust and inordinate desire—not the gods—tear man to pieces; <sup>13</sup> the necessity for enjoying the simple pleasure of *this* life; <sup>14</sup> the power of right reason to overcome our ills; <sup>15</sup> and the conception of 'mind as the master part of us.' <sup>16</sup> The image of the soul as a mirror suspended in the wind could well have been in-

10 *De Rerum Natura*, ii 20ff.

11 *Ibid.*, ii 167ff.; v 155ff.

12 *Ibid.*, ii 1090ff

13 *Ibid.*, iii.978ff., 1053ff.

14 *Ibid.*, iii.931ff.

15 *Ibid.*, iii.319ff

16 *Ibid.*, iii.396ff.

spired by several passages in Lucretius, notably that in the fourth book (ll.98-326) which is a long and detailed discussion of the laws of images and their reflection.

Much of the natural description in 'Empedocles on Etna' seems to draw upon Lucretius' own discussion of the elements, particularly storms and lightning.<sup>17</sup> The storms, moreover, assail both the innocent and the guilty,<sup>18</sup> as

Like us, the lightning-fires  
Love to have scope and play.

Lucretius has in his sixth book his own description of Mount Etna and the volcano;<sup>19</sup> and the final scene of Empedocles alone at night on the mountain with only the deathless stars and their 'pure dark ether' for his consolation seems to draw upon the eloquent passages in the fifth book of *De Rerum Natura*,<sup>20</sup> as they do upon Parmenides. And it may not be too fanciful to observe Lucretius' conception of the soul's having a fourth substance hidden deeply away in our bodies—a force without name, than which nothing is more deeply concealed:

*nam penitus prorsum latet haec natura subestque  
nec magis hac infra quicquam est in corpore nostro  
atque anima est animae proporro totius ipsa.*

This last is a suggestion at least of that 'buried life' which Arnold was to exalt, not merely in his famous lyric, but in 'Empedocles' as well. In his last Hamlet-like dread of

<sup>17</sup> *De Rerum Natura*, i.265-303; and practically all of Book v.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, vi.387.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, vi.639-46, 680-702.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, v.509-63, 614-49.

something after death Empedocles envisions numerous rebirths of the soul:

To see if we will poise our life at last,  
To see if we will now at last be true  
To our own only true, deep-buried selves,  
Being one with which we are one with the whole world.

*Epictetus*

The stoical ethics, which forms so large a part of Empedocles as Arnold sees him, came, however, not from any one source. Much of it is in the spirit of Marcus Aurelius. Much is to be sought in many of Arnold's youthful favourites, and in none of these more clearly than in the Epictetus of his early sonnet. The central argument of Empedocles which issues in his final act gradually resolves itself into the main position of Epictetus:—the one way to be free is to despise the things which are not in man's power. And education is but learning to distinguish these things from the things that *are* in our power. 'Make us not fly to dreams, but *moderate desire*,' says Empedocles; this is the very theme of Epictetus, particularly of the *Enchiridion*, which commanded Arnold's special admiration. The final desire of Empedocles for freedom in death, lest he succumb to error and darkness, reads like a paraphrase of the opening of the great chapter on freedom in Epictetus,<sup>21</sup> which repeats an equally stirring earlier passage in Book ii, chapter i. Epictetus, even as Lucretius, attacks the desires of men and insists that the good lies not in material things and in estates, but in right reason. He

21 *Discourses*, Bk. iv., ch. i.

places, moreover, among the vanities of human wishes that of undue lust for learning, with that accompanying weariness and enervation which are in turn among the sorrows of Empedocles:

We scrutinise the dates  
Of long-past human things,  
The bounds of effaced states,  
The lines of deceased kings;

We search out dead men's words, and works of dead men's hands;

We shut our eyes, and muse  
How our own minds are made,  
What springs of thought they use,  
How righten'd, how betray'd—

And spend our wit to name what most employ unnamed.

One recalls Arnold's letter to Clough from Thun on September 23, 1849, wherein the list of his difficulties reads like a *précis* of 'Empedocles': 'My dearest Clough these are damned times—everything is against one—the height to which knowledge is come, the spread of luxury, our physical enervation, the absence of great *natures*, the unavoidable contact with millions of small ones, newspapers, cities, light profligate friends, moral desperadoes like Carlyle,'<sup>22</sup> etc.—in short, the 'thousand lines' that keep man from realizing his true nature. Nowhere are these distractions analysed more clearly than in Epictetus.

The image of the inn and the rude guest may reflect Epictetus' recurring analogy of the world to an inn.<sup>23</sup> And Empedocles' children who, after a fall, 'lend life to the

<sup>22</sup> *Letters to Clough*, p.111.

<sup>23</sup> *Discourses*, Bk.i., ch.24; ii.23.§3.

dumb stones' and beat the ground recall the nurse in Epictetus who stoutly beats the stone after her charges have stumbled.<sup>24</sup> It is not these scattered images, however, that are significant, but the virile, central doctrine of Epictetus, with which the mind of Empedocles and Pausanias is propped 'in these sad days,' even as was Arnold's own.

*Parmenides*

We know from Arnold's note that his image of 'the sun-born Virgins on the road to truth' (ii.239) came from the fragments of Parmenides. These he read in the same edition of Karsten in which he read Empedocles. If he took anything else from Parmenides it was perhaps something of the mood and setting for the night scene of Empedocles upon the mountain. Fire and night, which 'Opinion' gave as the two primary elements, are discussed by Parmenides in moving and poetical passages. The stars riding the æther are moved by a Necessity which recalls Empedocles' eloquent invocation (ii.276). And with Parmenides, as with Empedocles, thought is the master element of all.<sup>25</sup>

<sup>24</sup> Bk.iii., ch 19.

<sup>25</sup> Professor Oliver Elton has noticed that Arnold makes little use of Empedocles' own famed conception of Love and Strife; but he does observe that 'one of the passages where he comes nearest to the "grand style" is suggested by these lines—"There is an ordinance of Necessity, a time-honoured decree of the Gods, eternal and sealed fast by broad oaths, that whenever any of the dæmons whose portion is length of days have by sinning defiled their hands with bloodshed, or in compliance with Strife have committed the sin of false witness, they must wander for thrice ten thousand seasons away from the blessed, being born throughout the time in all manner of mortal shapes, as they pass in succession over the grievous pathways of life. For the might of the air drives them to the ocean, and the sea vomits them out on the soil of the earth, and the

*Carlyle's 'Sartor Resartus'*

There is another Diogenes who affected 'Empedocles'—the Diogenes Teufelsdröckh of *Sartor Resartus*. However poor Arnold's opinion of Carlyle, in 1849, Carlyle was nevertheless one of the four 'voices' heard at Oxford. Much of Empedocles' talk to Pausanias seems like a résumé of whole pages from *Sartor*—particularly the central notion that man has no right to bliss and that his misery comes of striving to make his will the measure of his rights; that is, he has not, according to the high Kantian doctrine of Carlyle, reduced his 'Denominator to a zero.'

*Senancour*

There is, as usual, Obermann.<sup>26</sup> Arnold was reading him in 1849, and in November of that year composed his first poem in Senancour's honour. The dilemma of Empedocles, like Obermann's, is that, neither in solitude nor in society, can he discover and live by any ultimate truth; indeed, he fears the loss of power to feel and *live* by anything at all.

earth again into the beams of the tireless sun, and he flings them into the eddies of the air. So each one in turn receives them, but they loathe them all alike. Of such dæmons I, too, am one, an exile and a wanderer by God's will, obedient to the frenzy of Strife." ' Professor Elton indicates indebtedness to Professor A. C. Pearson for the reference to H. Diels, *Fragmente der Vorsokratiker*, ed. 3, I, 267, and for the translation. See Elton, *A Survey of English Literature*, 1830-1920, London, 1920, I, 426.

- 26 See Mrs. Sells, *Matthew Arnold and France*, for many—perhaps too many—parallels. Her claim for the importance of Obermann—*enfant terrible et perpétuel*—in Arnold's poetry in 1849 is very just. Perhaps the most striking parallel suggested is one for the lines on the mirror: '*Le métal que l'art a poli reçoit l'image d'une partie de l'univers; nous la recevons comme lui. . . . Ces conceptions, dont l'immensité surprend notre faiblesse et remplit d'enthousiasme nos cœurs bornés, sont peut-être moins pour la nature que le plus imparfait des miroirs pour l'industrie humaine.*' (Sells, p. 152.)

The stoical part of Obermann is, in turn, not unrelated to the counsel Empedocles gives to Pausanias. Obermann, like Arnold, had read the classics; in 1849 he was, for his English devotee, a moving and living gloss upon an ancient text.

Arnold's own famous criticism of his poem is given in the Preface of 1853, in which the reasons for excluding 'Empedocles' from his collected pieces furnish the introduction to the remarks on the nature of poetry with which that Preface is concerned. Arnold, ever ready to criticize his own productions, there charges the poem with failure to 'inspirit and rejoice the reader.' 'The suffering,' he continues, 'finds no vent in action . . . a continuous state of mental distress is prolonged, unrelieved by incident, hope, or resistance; in which there is everything to be endured, nothing to be done.'

There is truth in these charges, of course. The theme of suicide from boredom is inconsistent with the doctrine of *σπουδή*. The poem is verbose, and there are sandy stretches of prose in the philosophical lyric—even the final soliloquy is hurt by them. The bright Greek clarity which Arnold missed in the thought of Empedocles himself is absent from the poet's own verses; even the lovely lyrics of Callicles can hardly supply the lack. As for the philosophy itself, Arnold has indicated in his letter to Mr. Dunn that it was a dramatic and historical representation, not a guide for life. Its superficiality is best indicated by the failure of Empedocles, to whom one concedes—long before he has ended—that human life is mean, to proceed to the obvious and more revealing question of how we *found*



*out*, as Emerson says, that it was mean. But these superficialities are not Arnold's if he was simply loyal to his dramatic pattern and its limitations.

And, indeed, has Arnold not been too hard upon himself and distracted his readers from the excellence that is really there? Is there nothing here to 'inspirit and rejoice the reader?' There is, for one thing, the brave, stoic attempt of Empedocles himself to hearten Pausanias in the noon-day conversation on the mountain and to send him back to live with courage and wisdom in a world that for Empedocles is dead. There is also the loftiness of Empedocles' own mind which atones somewhat for the futility of his action. His repudiation of the material world exhibits his passion for that freedom without which no valid life of the spirit is possible; and such, one may say, is the brightest and bravest conviction which Arnold's poetry has to offer at any time. In his despair over the people of Agrigentum Empedocles recalls another who said, 'Except ye see signs and wonders, ye will not believe.' And in his last soliloquy beneath the stars he voices some of the warmest and most moving poetry that it was given Arnold to write—poetry with a touch of cosmic majesty, which leaves the reader with Wordsworth's feeling that man is greater than he knows. The action, what there is of it, is depressing; the thought is bitter wisdom, at its best; but there emerges some hint of spiritual grandeur which is the ultimate secret—even as it is often the ultimate paradox—of Matthew Arnold's writing. The lonely figure of Empedocles is one of that distinguished solitary company who are for Arnold the true Children of the Second Birth. They are somehow perversely arresting and effective, even when they are not

quite distinct. It is not unlikely that future criticism will support a recent verdict that '*Empedocles* more and more appears the most considerable poem of a comparable length by a Victorian.'<sup>27</sup>

The poem and the poet's criticism of it were destined to exert a considerable influence on the poetry of the time. Arnold's estimate of action as the chief feature of a poem is quoted by Browning in his preface to the translation of the *Agamemnon* of Aeschylus (1877). Browning's version of the Greek drama may be read as a piece in which action is indeed 'all in all,' yet which is painfully lacking in those very qualities of poetic ornament which Arnold would have us regard as of strictly secondary importance. It has, furthermore, been argued that Browning's 'Cleon' (1855) is to be understood as a kind of refutation of Arnold's theory, inasmuch as it portrays a disciple of Greek culture brought to the highest degree of refinement, yet incapable of deriving from it anything but despair because of a lack of faith in the significance of life and in the destiny of man.<sup>28</sup> The preliminary quotation used by Browning, 'As certain also of your own poets have said,' may well contain a delicate *double entendre*, with a glance at Arnold as well as a reference to the poets read by St. Paul.

27 See T. Sturge Moore, 'Matthew Arnold,' *Essays and Studies by Members of the English Association*, 1938, VOL. XXIV, p. 21.

28 See A. W. Crawford, 'Browning's "Cleon,"' *Journal of English and Germanic Philology*, VOL. XXVI., October, 1927, p. 485. Professor DeVane holds that 'Browning became more interested in providing an answer to Matthew Arnold than in anything else.'



## LATER POEMS



## PREFATORY NOTE TO 'LATER POEMS'

THIS category appeared first in the edition of 1885, and contained only three poems, 'Westminster Abbey,' 'Poor Matthias,' and 'Geist's Grave.' Even of these three, one was not new, as 'Geist's Grave' had been brought over from the class of Elegiac Poems, where it had been placed in 1881. 'Kaiser Dead,' which was written in April, 1887, was added only in 1890, after the death of the poet, when the first one-volume edition appeared.

These later poems, though differing in theme, were all elegiac in kind, and it was sometimes suggested that in the last years of Arnold's poetic activity (if he could indeed be said to have been poetically active at all) he was inspired only by the grave, and that even his humorous poems dealt, like the rest, with death.

The designation, 'Later Poems,' was itself a melancholy indication that the poet's work must now be regarded as practically complete, and that his readers were to expect from him nothing more than occasional verse. This exhaustion of his poetic productivity he had foreseen with alarm, and, from time to time, had expressed his intention to prevent it if possible.<sup>1</sup> As early as 1861 (August 15), he had written to his mother:

1 In his note-book for 1882 he copies, under the heading 'Prose and poetry,' the following comment of Andrew Lang, which must have given him both satisfaction and concern: 'Sense and noble satire, though rare, are still not so rare as poetry. It is poetry that is scarce, and it is poetry that works on men's minds like a spell. *Sohrab and Rustum*, or *The Sick King in Bokhara* does more for culture than a world of essays and reviews, and disquisitions on the hideous middle class. The pamphlet reprint of "Selected Poems," bought at an American railway station by some man who perhaps purchases at adventure, may do more to cultivate the love of beauty and the love of nature, to educate and console, than many great volumes of theology.' (See 'Matthew Arnold,' *Century Magazine*, April, 1882, VOL XXIII., p. 863.)

I must finish off for the present my critical writings between this and forty, and give the next ten years earnestly to poetry. It is my last chance. It is not a bad ten years of one's life for poetry if one resolutely uses it, but it is a time in which, if one does not use it, one dries up and becomes prosaic altogether.<sup>2</sup>

Again, in 1863 (February 4):

After the summer I mean to lie fallow again for some time, or to busy myself with poetry only.<sup>3</sup>

In November he tells his mother that he intends to 'do nothing for the magazines' in 1864, but 'to do some poetry and to ripen.'<sup>4</sup> But the decade of the 'sixties produced only one volume, the *New Poems* of 1867, containing in truth several poems of the first importance ('Rugby Chapel,' 'Thyrsis,' 'Dover Beach,' and 'Obermann Once More') but, in addition, pieces which had been written long before. This was the last independent volume of verse which Arnold published; after this, less than a dozen new poems were added to the collected editions.

Until the very end of his life he had hoped to be able to write the tragedy of 'Lucretius,' which had been in his mind almost from the beginning of his poetical career.

#### WESTMINSTER ABBEY

This poem was first published in the *Nineteenth Century*, for January, 1882, as the first contribution for the year. It was added to the complete poetical works in the edition of 1885. Entries in Arnold's diary for the year 1881 read

<sup>2</sup> *Letters* I.142.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, I.183.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, I.208.

'work at poem'—doubtless 'Westminster Abbey'—almost daily from October 31 to November 16, when it was apparently finished. The entry for November 28 has: 'write & send poem.'

Arthur Penrhyn Stanley, the friend of the poet and of the Arnold family since Rugby days, died on July 18, 1881. In 1844 he had published his famous life of Dr. Arnold and won the lasting gratitude of the family at Fox How. Matthew Arnold found opportunity in 1863 to express his own admiration for Stanley in a review of the latter's *Lectures on the Jewish Church*.<sup>1</sup> On September 20, 1872, he wrote to M. Fontanès:

*Le Dean Stanley est le chef très brillant et très adroit de la minorité libérale du clergé anglican. Mieux que personne, il a l'instinct de la politique qu'il faut suivre, politique très réservée pour le fond des doctrines, très ferme pour tout le reste, et bien décidée à ne pas se laisser effrayer.*<sup>2</sup>

At the time of Stanley's death Arnold contributed to the papers no memorial notice about the man whom he regarded as the last effective disciple of Dr. Arnold.

I cannot write now about his character and his charm—the loss is too recent. . . . What is clear is that the Broad Church *among the clergy* may be almost said to have perished with Stanley—for the moment, at any rate; there is plenty of it in the nation, but Stanley's signal merit was that in his person it became a power among *the clergy* likewise.<sup>3</sup>

Arnold in his notes indicates Dugdale's *Monasticon Anglicanum* and Montalembert's *Les Moines d'Occident* as the source of the legend which he uses to begin the poem—

1 Cf. *Macmillan's Magazine*, VOL. VII., February, 1863, pp. 327-36.

2 *Letters* II.88.

3 *Ibid.*, II.193.



the story of St. Peter's appearance to the Thames fisherman the night before the Abbey was dedicated. Arnold believed that Stanley 'would have taken great delight' in the use of this ancient tale, 'which up to the Reformation was as universally a favourite as the legends of Alfred, but in our day is known to hardly a soul, though A.P.S. knew it well himself.'<sup>4</sup>

Indeed, Stanley had given an account of the legend—with a reference to Dugdale—in his *Historical Memorials of Westminster Abbey*,<sup>5</sup> published in 1868 and dedicated to Queen Victoria. Legends like this, Stanley says, 'have in common the merit of containing a lurking protest against the necessity of external benediction for things or persons sacred by their own intrinsic virtue—a covert declaration of the great catholic principle (to use Hooker's words) that "God's grace is not tied to outward forms."'

Stanley's detailed and often eloquent account of the history, pageantry, and significance of the Abbey<sup>6</sup> must certainly have influenced and perhaps even inspired Arnold's poem, particularly such lines as these:

Twelve hundred years and more  
 Along the holy floor  
 Pageants have pass'd, and tombs of mighty kings  
 Efface the humbler graves of Sebert's line,  
 And, as years sped, the minster-aisles divine  
 Grew used to the approach of Glory's wings.

<sup>4</sup> *Letters* II.195

<sup>5</sup> Cf. pp.19-21.

<sup>6</sup> It is not without point that Stanley, in his discussion of the Abbey's great processions and the coronation of Queen Victoria, found opportunity to pay his usual tribute to his old Headmaster at Rugby. 'For the best expression which has, perhaps, ever been given of the full religious aspect of an English Coronation, I cannot forbear to refer to the sermon preached on that day, in the parish church of Ambleside, by Dr. Arnold.' *Historical Memorials*, etc., p.109, n.1.

Probably the best comment on the poem is that given by Arnold himself in a letter to Miss Frances Arnold:

Whatever else I leave undone, I must not leave unwritten my letter to you, for your letter about the poem gave me very great pleasure. I was really uncertain, and I am uncertain still, about the public's reception of the poem. I always feel that the public is not disposed to take me cordially; it receives my things, as Gray says it received all his except the *Elegy*, with more astonishment than pleasure at first, and does not quite make out what I would be at; however, that the things should wear well, and be found to give pleasure as they come to be better known, is the great matter. But I was very anxious that my own family and the nearest friends of dear Arthur Stanley should not be dissatisfied; and therefore your warm satisfaction, and that of my dearest K., gave me very great pleasure. . . . Many will think, no doubt, as they did about "Thyrsis" at first, that there should have been more of direct personal effusion as to the departed and as to my feelings towards him. However, one can only do these things in one's own way. You will find all the words you mention in your volumes of Richardson's *Dictionary*. It is curious what happened about *cecily*.<sup>7</sup> The word came into my mind as so suitable in that place that I determined to use it, as its formation from *cecitas* in Latin and *cécité* in French is as regular and simple as that of *levity*, from *levitas* in Latin and *lévité* in French. Then I thought I would look in Richardson for the word, though really not expecting to find it there, and I found that the word had been used by the great Hooker. Those Elizabethans had indeed a sense for diction. *Pullulate* is used by the Cambridge Platonists a good deal; *let* as a noun substantive is thorough good English, being used several times by Shakespeare. But look in your Richardson; he is bad for definitions, but a treasure for his passages in illustration.<sup>8</sup>

7 Cf. II.154-60:

What had our Arthur gain'd, to stop and see,  
After light's term, a term of cecity,  
A Church once large and then grown strait in soul?  
To live, and see arise,  
Alternating with wisdom's too short reign,  
Folly revived, re-furbish'd sophistries,  
And pullulating rites externe and vain?

8 *Letters* II.197-8.

There is, indeed, a striking contrast between the rather elaborate art, the studied imagery and nice diction of 'Westminster Abbey,' which Mr. Houghton thinks recalls Milton's ode 'On the Morning of Christ's Nativity,'<sup>9</sup> and the large, plain, impassioned utterance of 'Rugby Chapel.' But the poems complement each other, not only in the men they celebrate, but in what they reveal of that deep religious background against which moved Arnold's world-worn melancholy men, his solitary wanderers, his ancient stoics and sceptics, and even his shining pagan gods and goddesses. *Cum multa legeris et cognoveris, ad unum semper oportet redire principium.*

#### GEIST'S GRAVE

This elegy on the dachshund which belonged to the poet's son, Richard Penrose, was published in the *Fortnightly Review* for January, 1881. A few copies were struck off from the types of the magazine, a folded sheet forming a pamphlet for the author's use.<sup>1</sup> The existence of these 'off-prints' may have encouraged the 'forger,' who put forth a separate edition of the poem, similar to that of 'Saint Brandan,' which purported to be a genuine publication by the poet. It was in the form of a small pamphlet, measuring 6 $\frac{7}{8}$ " x 5 $\frac{1}{4}$ ", in a grey wrapper, bearing simply the title of the poem, and a heavy black line as border. The title-page reads,

Geist's Grave / by / Matthew Arnold / London / printed only  
for a few Friends / 1881

9 *The Influence of the Classics on the Poetry of Matthew Arnold*, p.28.

1 A presentation copy to Clara Grant Duff is in the Yale Collection.

No printer's name is found in the book. It appears to have been produced sometime in the last decade of the nineteenth century. Copies are usually found in pristine condition, and show no evidence of ever having been read. No presentation copies are found—a fact which alone would cause the pamphlet to fall under suspicion, since Arnold was, as a rule, particularly generous in distributing signed copies of his books among his friends.<sup>2</sup>

The poem was included as one of the Elegiac Poems in the collected edition of 1881.

Arnold's note-book for October 31, 1880, has: 'Dear little Geist died.' Entries in his diary of the same year show that he worked at the stanzas between November 9 and November 13, the day on which they were completed.

In this and the two following elegies on animals Arnold struck out what was for him a new type, at once amusing and tender. It is not poetry of the highest kind, but it is winning and gracious in its revelation of his personality, and gave pleasure to certain readers who had found his earlier poetry somewhat austere and coldly intellectual.

#### POOR MATTHIAS

This was the last poem added to the 'canon' of his verse during Arnold's lifetime. It was published in *Macmillan's Magazine* for December, 1882, as the leading contribution of the issue. It was added to the complete poetical works in the edition of 1885.

Entries in his diary for 1882 indicate that the poem was

<sup>2</sup> For a fuller account see Carter and Pollard, *An Enquiry into the Nature of Certain Nineteenth Century Pamphlets*, pp. 163-4.

composed at intervals between October 12 and October 25, the day on which it was completed.

The canary bird celebrated in the poem belonged to the poet's daughter, Eleanor (afterwards Lady Sandhurst), the 'Nelly' of the dirge.

The similarity of the bird's name to the poet's inspired a parody which appeared in the pages of the *World* under the same title, 'Poor Matthias.' Of this Arnold wrote to John Morley, on December 6,

Parody is a vile art, but I must say I read 'Poor Matthias' in the *World* with an amused pleasure. I wonder if it is that demon Traill.<sup>1</sup>

Henry Duff Traill (1842-1900), author of several volumes of light verse, may well have been the author of the satiric lines, which were reprinted in the *Letters*, though they were hardly worth that honour. They refer of course to the monotonous tone of the elegiac verse which marks the close of Arnold's poetic career:

Poor Matthias! many a year  
Has flown since first upon our ear  
Fell that sweetly-doleful song  
With its ancient tale of wrong.  
Now those curls, were wont to stray  
O'er that brow so gravely gay,  
Thin have grown and streaked with gray,  
And the crow's cross tracery  
Mars that eye's lucidity.  
But the burden never falters,  
But the chorus never alters;

<sup>1</sup> *Letters* II.209.

Those smooth periods no more vary  
 Than the song of your canary.  
 Won't you give us something new?  
*That* we know as well as you.

Arnold himself described his poem to Morley<sup>2</sup> as 'a simple thing enough, but honest.' But it is more than this. There are moments in it which might well supply 'touchstones' for verse in this kind—notably the description of Atossa,<sup>3</sup> the aged cat:

Cruel, but composed and bland,  
 Dumb, inscrutable and grand,  
 So Tiberius might have sat,  
 Had Tiberius been a cat.

### KAISER DEAD

This, the last of Arnold's poems, appeared in the *Fortnightly Review* for July, 1887, as the leading contribution. It was reprinted in the complete edition of 1890. The manuscript, three pages, foolscap, signed, was sold at Christie's April 22, 1918, for the benefit of the British Red Cross. It fetched £6.16s.6d.

On April 7, 1887, Arnold wrote to Arthur Galton, 'We have just lost our dear dear mongrel, Kaiser, and we are very sad.'<sup>1</sup> 'Kai' and Max are referred to several times in the *Letters* (VOL. II, 277-8, 287, 288, 323).

As a metrical experiment, Arnold adopted what may perhaps fairly be called the favourite stanza-form of Robert Burns, which that poet had used for two elegies,

<sup>2</sup> *Letters* II.207.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. *Letters* II.69-70. There as elsewhere, the cat is called 'Toss.'

<sup>1</sup> Galton, *Two Essays upon Matthew Arnold*, p. 111.

'Poor Mailie's' (an indebtedness duly acknowledged by Arnold in a footnote) and 'Tam Samson's.'

In his essay on 'The Study of Poetry' Arnold asserted that we 'prize Burns most for his touches of piercing, sometimes almost intolerable, pathos.'<sup>2</sup> In the Scotch poet's subtle union of tenderness, simplicity, and humour, Arnold found the perfect model for the kind of poetry of which 'Kaiser Dead' is an example.

The 'rival bard' of Penbryn is Sir Lewis Morris (1833-1907), author of *The Epic of Hades*. To his house on the outskirts of Carmarthen in Wales he had given the name 'Penbryn,' which was the name of the house near Aberystwyth where his distinguished grandfather had spent his later years. In his *Songs Unsung* (1883), the first volume issued under his name, the title-page read: 'Lewis Morris of Penbryn.'

Arnold, who regularly read the *Saturday Review*, could hardly have missed the amusing and withering review of *Songs Unsung* which appeared in the issue of November 24, 1883.<sup>3</sup> The reviewer points out that Morris is really a phenomenon—'one of the most popular poets of his kind, if not the most popular, with readers and critics alike, since the late Mr. Sotheby.' Sixteen editions of *The Epic of Hades* had already appeared; and the author has 'fascinated' Mr. Bright, the Non-Conformists, and the Bishop of Gloucester and Bristol (incidentally Arnold's own favourite prey). The reviewer amuses himself with the poet's aptitude for geographic niceties and repeats '(of Penbryn)' after his name twenty times in the course of the article: 'Nor is Mr. Lewis Morris (of Penbryn) likely to be any more annoyed by the surprise which the tacking on of this latter designation on the title-page of a book has excited among some Englishmen careless of territorialities. There is no end to the *lazzi* which levity suggests on such occasions, and sensible men disdain them. It is even said that A. having asked B. "Why

<sup>2</sup> *Essays in Criticism, Second Series*, 1888, p. 52.

<sup>3</sup> Pp. 666-7.

does the author of the *Epic of Hades* call himself Mr. Lewis Morris of Penbryn?" it was answered "To distinguish himself from Mr. William Morris—of Parnassus." All students of poetry will know how to appreciate this personality and the ignorance which prompted it.'

Morris, if not the 'rival' of Tennyson, whose guest he frequently was, had at least used Tennyson to advantage. The series of blank verse monologues which constitutes *The Epic of Hades* had been suggested by 'Tithonus.' And in 1879, *Gwen, a Drama in Monologue, in Six Acts* betrayed Morris's perusal of *Maud*. As the *Saturday Review* said, 'There is probably no writer of the present day who has, with such a frank and generous self-denial, avoided the attempt to make a style of his own.' The debt of 'Pictures' in *Songs Unsung* to 'The Palace of Art' is then indicated.

Morris was also known to Arnold, of course, because of his activities in behalf of education in Wales. It is significant that his poems had attracted Mr. Gladstone, whose admirations Arnold did not always share.





## **CANCELLED POEMS**



## ALARIC AT ROME

THE origin and history of 'Alaric at Rome' are known to us only from information derived from the published poem. It was printed at Rugby, a pamphlet of eleven pages, without preface, bound in a rose-coloured wrapper which reproduces exactly the title-page. It bears the arms of Rugby School framed in an irregular octagon, as if part of the architectural design on a stone wall. It reads:

Alaric at Rome./A Prize Poem,/recited in Rubgy School,./June XII,  
MDCCCXL./[Ornament]/Rugby: Combe and Crossley./MDCCCXL./

As Arnold never cared to reprint this poem, all trace of it was lost until 1888, when the survival of a copy was made known by Sir Edmund Gosse in an article entitled, 'Mr. Matthew Arnold's Earliest Publication.'<sup>1</sup> The authenticity of the poem was acknowledged by Arnold in a letter to Gosse dated, according to that author, February 9, 1888, and containing the following sentence: 'Yes! "Alaric at Rome" is my Rugby prize-poem, and I think it is better than my Oxford one, "Cromwell"; only you will see that I had been very much reading "Childe Harold."'

Five years later, Mr. T. J. Wise published a facsimile. By this time two or three copies of the original pamphlet had been found. The type of the facsimile was also used for a forgery, copies of which are not uncommon. They are usually found in rich bindings, without the rose-coloured wrapper.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *The Athenæum*, April 28, 1888, pp. 533-4.

<sup>2</sup> For a discussion of the relation between the facsimile and the forgery, see an article by Roland Baughman in the *Huntington Library Bulletin* for April, 1936, entitled 'Some Victorian Forged Rarities.'

The youthful poet found the material for 'Alaric at Rome' in Gibbon, an indebtedness which is sufficiently acknowledged in a series of footnotes, five in number, drawn from the historian. Orosius and Ovid are also credited with having inspired certain phrases in the poem. But it is the treatment of the theme, rather than its derivation, that is significant. Nothing could be more indicative of the manner which was to become characteristic of Matthew Arnold. Of the thrilling and picturesque incidents in Alaric's career, death, and burial the boy made no use. Material which the imagination of a Scott or even a Macaulay might have made vivid and absorbing is left undeveloped and unilluminated. Instead, we are presented with a series of meditations and long apostrophes to the Eternal City. Alaric himself is represented as assailed by sentimental reflections,

Perchance his wandering heart was far away,  
Lost in dim memories of his early home,  
And his young dreams of conquest . . .

Thus Alaric is the first of that long line of solitary individuals, projected against a famous and highly-coloured background, who were to assume so prominent a position in the poet's work.

On the brow  
Of thy stern hill, thou mighty Capitol,  
One form stands gazing: silently below  
The morning mists from tower and temple roll.

And like Empedocles and Obermann, his is a weary and fluctuating soul:

One little year; that restless soul shall rest.

Thus the elegiac note also makes its appearance in Arnold's first poem, and the lines descriptive of Alaric sleeping in death,

Tranquilly, above that troubled breast,  
The sunny waters hold their joyous way,

are even more characteristic of the poet that was to be than are the moral sentiments with which the poem is brought to a quiet close.

#### CROMWELL

In the subject assigned for the Newdigate competition in the year 1842-3 there could have been little to attract or stimulate the youthful poet in Balliol College. The subject was, to be sure, timely. A new estimate of Cromwell was becoming popular. In 1840 Carlyle had brought him forward as an example of the Hero as King, and in 1843 was known to be at work upon the *Letters and Speeches* (published in 1845).

But the 'voices in the air' at Oxford during the early 'forties were not such as had fallen on the ear of Oliver Cromwell two centuries before; rather were they opposed to everything for which the Protector had stood. The selection of the subject may well have been intended to turn the attention of young enthusiasts back to the principles of Puritanism, and away from the pernicious doctrines of Catholicism with which Pusey and Newman had infected the University. The new enthusiasm should be borne in mind as we read the description of Laud,

His drooping head bowed meekly on his breast;  
His hands were folded like a saint at rest!

Arnold, in whom spiritual concerns were already dominant, had no choice but to confine himself to the hero's meditations (as he had done in the case of Alaric); he had no power to sing of battles. Instead of action, we are presented with a series of Cromwell's reflections before the beginning of his active career and a prophetic vision of his future, in which brief characterizations of men with whom his memory was to be associated are hastily struck off. Arnold looked into Hallam, Hume, and Clarendon, and into Lord Nugent's *Memorials of Hampden* for such material as he needed, but in the composition he never struck fire. The poem, as Arnold himself intimated, is not equal to 'Alaric at Rome.'<sup>1</sup> The best thing in it is a passage of half-a-dozen lines, confessedly inspired by Wordsworth:

High fate is theirs, who where the silent sky  
Stoops to the soaring mountains, live and die.

But such a life can be associated with Cromwell's only by the principle of contrast, and the poet leaves the reader in considerable doubt whether he was interested in the subject at all.

The title-page of the first edition reads,

Cromwell:/a prize poem,/recited in the theatre, Oxford;/June 28,  
1843./By/Matthew Arnold,/Balliol College./[Device of the arms of  
Oxford University.]/Oxford:/printed and published by J. Vincent./  
M DCCC XLIII.

Seven hundred and fifty copies were issued. Three years later it was included in the *Additions to Prize Poems*, also

<sup>1</sup> See p.321.

published by Vincent. The pamphlet contains fifteen octavo pages in a grey wrapper. It is without preface or advertisements, and for the copyright Arnold is said to have received ten pounds. Although the title-page asserts that the poem was 'recited' in the Theatre, the uproar on Commemoration Day was so great that the poem was never 'delivered aloud.'

'Cromwell' was several times reprinted. A second edition was published by T. and G. Shrimpton of Oxford in 1863. This is a page for page reprint of the first edition, issued in a green wrapper, and bearing on the back cover an advertisement of College Rhymes, contributed by members of the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge.

A third edition appeared in 1891 after the poet's death, also from the Shrimptons (now A. Thomas Shrimpton & Son). 'Cromwell' was also included in the edition of Oxford Prize Poems, published in 1846.

The disturbance in the Theatre which prevented Arnold's reading is described in *The Times* of June 29, 1843. Apparently there were many causes for excitement as the undergraduates followed their usual cheers and hisses for public characters of the day by some more particular demonstration. They were about equally divided in their opinions of Dr. Pusey, Hampden, Newman and Macmullen; but the real trouble arose over the granting of the D.C.L. degree to Edward Everett, the American Minister, formerly a Unitarian preacher. Cries of '*Non placet*' were shouted in open convocation; but both these and the voice of the Vice-Chancellor were drowned by undergraduate groans and hisses for an unpopular proctor, Jelf, of Christ Church. A correspondent of *The Times* wrote:



'A scene now ensued which it is impossible adequately to describe. What business took place was transacted in dumb show.' The Vice-Chancellor was at length obliged to dissolve the Convocation.

### THE HAYSWATER BOAT

This poem appeared only in the volume of 1849, in which it occupied a place between the stanzas to a Gipsy Child and 'The Forsaken Merman,' two other romantic poems. Hayswater is one of the English lakes.

### SONNET TO THE HUNGARIAN NATION

This sonnet, probably intended to be in the manner of Wordsworth's political sonnets of 1802, appeared in the *Examiner*, signed 'A,' for July 21, 1849. It is interesting as the first poem of Arnold's to appear in a periodical, and the first verse of his printed after *The Strayed Reveller* (February, 1849).

On July 29, 1849, Arnold wrote to his mother, 'There was a sonnet of mine in last week's *Examiner*—"To the Hungarian Nation," but as it was not worth much, I don't send it.'<sup>1</sup>

The *Examiner* of the same date commented editorially on the Hungarian crisis in an article entitled 'The Meeting for Hungary.' This had been preceded in earlier issues by other forceful pleas for the distressed nation. On July 14 an editorial article began as follows,

<sup>1</sup> *Letters* I.10.

The Hungarian nation is taking steps to claim a recognition of its independence by the great powers of Western Europe. The grounds on which this claim rests are unassailable. Not only, in a legal view, is the Hungarian cause strictly just (its bitterest enemies not daring to impugn it in that respect), but, notwithstanding all confident assertions to the contrary, the national government of Hungary is strong. It not merely commands the obedience, but receives the enthusiastic support, of the great majority of the Hungarian population. The existing struggle is not against Austria, but against Russia. The Austrians would long since have been driven from the Hungarian soil, had they not called in a foreign auxiliary to crush the nation they could not cope with themselves. The Austrian forces which at present occupy a small corner of Hungary are quite insignificant in comparison with the Russian masses. Henceforward, at least, the war must be considered as a war of defence against a foreign invasion.

‘DESTINY.’ ‘COURAGE.’

Lyrics from the 1852 volume, never reprinted by Arnold. ‘Destiny,’ announcing the futility of man’s inward struggle, must have belonged to the poems inspired by Marguerite. ‘Courage’ may have been cancelled as echoing the praise of Byron in ‘Memorial Verses.’

THEKLA’S ANSWER

This rendering of Schiller’s ‘Thekla,’ appeared only in 1853. Arnold gave no reason for its rejection.

‘BELOW THE SURFACE STREAM’

For the lines beginning thus, see above, p.195. They appeared first in the second instalment of ‘St. Paul and Prot-

estantism,' *The Cornhill Magazine*, VOL.XX, November, 1869, p.608. Arnold uses them to suggest the probable inner, spiritual meaning and the application to life which Paul gave to the doctrines of theology.

#### ROME-SICKNESS

This poem was contributed to *In Memoriam A Wreath of Stray Leaves to the memory of Emily Bliss Gould* ob: 31st Aug. 1875. Rome: Italo-American School Press, 106 Via in Arcione, MDCCCLXXV. The verses, signed Matthew Arnold, are at p.49. The poem, perhaps unfortunately, was never printed in any volume of Arnold's verse.

The volume was a miscellany, originally planned by Mrs. Gould herself, who had established an industrial school and home for Italian children. Two printing-presses were set up there, and the children were trained as type-setters. Mrs. Gould, wife of the resident physician to the American Consulate, and foundress of the School, originally planned this volume as a means of raising the money needed for carrying on the charitable work which she had initiated; but she died in the course of its preparation. The miscellany was then completed and printed as a memorial to her.

#### S.S. 'LUSITANIA'

This inadequate sonnet was printed in the *Nineteenth Century* for January, 1879. It was never reprinted. It commemorates a voyage made by Richard Penrose Arnold (1855-1908), the poet's third son, in the winter of 1878-79.

Shortly after leaving Oxford, where he had gone from Harrow, Richard Arnold went to Australia. He worked in a bank there, was married, and, upon his return to England, was appointed by Sir William Harcourt as factory inspector in the Worcester district. He was in ill health for several years before his death. Handsome and popular, 'Dick' Arnold was well-known as a musician, with a passion for music not directly inherited from his father.

## TRANSLATIONS FROM HOMER

THESE specimens of translation from the *Iliad*, in hexameter verse, are found in the third lecture *On Translating Homer* (1861). We print these here, but we do not include them as 'cancelled poems' in the new Oxford Standard Authors text, because they are translations to illustrate a prose essay and were never published by Arnold as separate poems. Arnold's friend Arthur Clough, whose death brought forth a eulogy from Arnold in his lecture at Oxford, had also been busy with Homer.

The first passage was also translated by Tennyson, and printed in 1864 in *Enoch Arden*, etc. (p.179).

*Translations from Homer*

So shone forth, in front of Troy, by the bed of Xanthus,  
Between that and the ships, the Trojans' numerous fires.  
In the plain there were kindled a thousand fires: by each one  
There sate fifty men, in the ruddy light of the fire:  
By their chariots stood the steeds, and champ'd the white barley  
While their masters sate by the fire, and waited for Morning.—

And with pity the son of Saturn saw them bewailing,  
 And he shook his head, and thus address'd his own bosom:  
 'Ah, unhappy pair, to Peleus why did we give you,  
 To a mortal? but ye are without old age and immortal.  
 Was it that ye, with man, might have your thousands of sorrows?  
 For than man, indeed, there breathes no wretcheder creature,  
 Of all living things, that on earth are breathing and moving.'

(pp.94-5)

Woman, I too take thought for this; but then I bethink me  
 What the Trojan men and Trojan women might murmur,  
 If like a coward I skulk'd behind, apart from the battle.  
 Nor would my own heart let me; my heart, which has bid me be  
 valiant

Always, and always fighting among the first of the Trojans,  
 Busy for Priam's fame and my own, in spite of the future.  
 For that day will come, my soul is assur'd of its coming,  
 It will come, when sacred Troy shall go to destruction,  
 Troy, and warlike Priam too, and the people of Priam.  
 And yet not that grief, which then will be, of the Trojans,  
 Moves me so much—not Hecuba's grief, nor Priam my father's,  
 Nor my brethren's, many and brave, who then will be lying  
 In the bloody dust, beneath the feet of their foemen—  
 As thy grief, when, in tears, some brazen-coated Achaian  
 Shall transport thee away, and the day of thy freedom be ended.  
 Then, perhaps, thou shalt work at the loom of another, in

Argos,

Or bear pails to the well of Messeis, or Hypereia,  
 So'rely against thy will, by strong Necessity's order.  
 And some man may say, as he looks and sees thy tears falling:  
*See, the wife of Hector, that great pre-eminent captain*  
*Of the horsemen of Troy, in the day they fought for their city.*  
 So some man will say; and then thy grief will redouble  
 At thy want of a man like me, to save thee from bondage.  
 But let me be dead, and the earth be mounded above me,  
 Ere I hear thy cries, and thy captivity told of.

(pp.97-8)

'Xanthus and Balius both, ye far-fam'd seed of Podarga!  
See that ye bring your master home to the host of the Argives  
In some other sort than your last, when the battle is ended;  
And not leave him behind, a corpse on the plain, like Patroclus.'

Then, from beneath the yoke, the fleet horse Xanthus address'd  
him:

Sudden he bow'd his head, and all his mane, as he bow'd it,  
Stream'd to the ground by the yoke, escaping from under the collar;  
And he was given a voice by the white-arm'd Goddess Hera.

'Truly, yet this time will we save thee, mighty Achilles!  
But thy day of death is at hand; nor shall *we* be the reason—  
No, but the will of Heaven, and Fate's invincible power.  
For by no slow pace or want of swiftness of ours  
Did the Trojans obtain to strip the arms from Patroclus;  
But that prince among Gods, the son of the lovely-hair'd Leto,  
Slew him fighting in front of the fray, and glorified Hector.  
But, for us, we vie in speed with the breath of the West-Wind,  
Which, men say, is the fleetest of winds; 'tis thou who art fated  
To lie low in death, by the hand of a God and a Mortal.'

Thus far he; and here his voice was stopped by the Furies.  
Then, with a troubled heart, the swift Achilles address'd him:

'Why dost thou prophesy so my death to me, Xanthus? It needs  
not.

I of myself know well, that here I am destin'd to perish,  
Far from my father and mother dear: for all that, I will not  
Stay this hand from fight, till the Trojans are utterly routed.'

So he spake, and drove with a cry his steeds into battle.



## UNPUBLISHED POEMS





## PREFATORY NOTE TO 'UNPUBLISHED POEMS'

AT his death Arnold left but few unpublished poems. He had printed everything which he could persuade himself to give to the world. There were, indeed, verses produced in childhood—verses hardly literary enough even to be termed *Juvenilia*—which he himself never dreamed of publishing, and which his descendants, in deference to his attitude, request us not to print. With their sentiment in this matter the present editors are entirely in accord. To Arnold the make-up of his collected verse was a matter of the last importance, and he would never willingly have seen it burdened with a mass of childish exercises, of interest only to intimate relatives.

A few unpublished poems are found in the mass of notes and first drafts which we have called the *Yale Manuscript*. Some of these are, as we have said, unfinished lyrics; some are mere fragments. There are also lines and phrases set down which, presumably, were thought to be of future value to the poet, such as

I believe  
That in the solitude beyond the stars  
Where broods the uncompanioned life of God . . .

and

The dropping patter of a child's small feet  
Did fall like rain in the forsaken street.

But these have no part in any completed poem, though some of them, perhaps, were intended for use in '*Lucretius*.'

Of the more nearly completed poems, there are three which seem to us worthy of being printed here, though we decline the responsibility of adding them to the 'canon' of Arnold's poetical works, which, for reasons given elsewhere, we prefer to leave as he himself wished it to be.

These pieces here printed—two for the first time—have obvious relations with important poems, or poetical plans of the author, and it is for this reason that we have included them in this volume of comment. Those who love Arnold's verse may find in them echoes of a music which is peculiarly his own.

[RUDE ORATOR]

These lines are found on the first page of the Yale Manuscript, which bears, as stated above (see p.9), the signature

M. Arnold

Ball: Coll:

1843.

The punctuation is that of the manuscript; the editors have, however, supplied the title. A German sentence is scrawled above the verses, which appears to read, '*Gott hat den Menschen einfach gemacht; aber wie er gewickelt wird & sich verwickelt ist sehr [schwer?] zu sagen.*'

The lines may perhaps have a connexion with the sonnet 'To an Independent Preacher.' They should be compared with Clough's 'In a Lecture Room,' which was written at Balliol College, in 1840.

[*Rude Orator*]

Rude orator

Who while I pondered on the lot of souls  
 Born Reason's Heirs, & of that Heritage  
 Made void, and held the sorrow & the Joy  
 Within the Balance of a slow suspense, 5  
 Didst force an audience ere I struck the Scale,  
 And dared pronounce it happy. What are these  
 Whereon thou buildest such a goodly Pride  
 Thy Proofs thy witness & thy Precedents.  
 That they should ease grave Counsel of its Care, 10  
 And win deliberate Reason to put on Fear  
 The credulous complexion of thy Dreams

—No lack of answer hast thou, O my Heart.  
 For such a damning catalogue of Ills  
 Thou dost alledge for Proof, such Instances 15  
 Raked from the swarming Gulf of Sorrow's Hell,  
 And to uphold thy desperate challenging,  
 Invitest Reason to forswear her state,  
 Make cession of her sceptre, doom herself  
 With such a peevish hardihood of scorn 20

7 MS. *it follows them cancelled.*

12 MS. *Woe is written next to Dreams as a possible substitution.*

16 MS. *Gulf, plural form cancelled.*

## [THE PILLARS OF THE UNIVERSE]

These lines, written with a lead pencil, are found on the thirty-third page of the Yale Manuscript. They were, apparently, intended for a portion of one of the songs of Callicles in 'Empedocles on Etna.' The punctuation is that of the editors, who have also supplied the title.

[*The Pillars of the Universe*]

And that golden-fruited strand,  
 Near where Atlas hath his stand,  
 Bearing on his shoulders broad  
 Earth, and Heaven's star-spangled load,  
 In the farthest western wild; 5  
 Or far eastward, where up-pil'd  
 To maintain the Caspian free  
 From the encroaching Euxine Sea,  
 In his snowy light austere,  
 Great Elbruis whitens clear: 10  
 Prisoning in his crevic'd stones  
 The too-daring Titan's bones.

6 *Above* Or far as an alternative reading, There or

8 *Above* encroaching as an alternative reading, tyrannous and next it, fiercer

9 snowy written over roseate cancelled, and then, as an alternative reading, wintry  
 11 above crevic'd as an alternative reading, rifted

## [TO META: THE CLOISTER]

This poem is found on pages 55-6 of the Yale Manuscript. In the verses as printed here the punctuation is supplied by the editors, who have also supplied the title.

The poem <sup>1</sup> was first printed by C. B. Tinker in an essay entitled 'Arnold's Poetic Plans.' The relation of the poem to Arnold's list of poems to be composed in 1849 is there explained. It was the youthful poet's intention to write a series of poems on the various restraints imposed upon the human spirit by the religious sentiment, by the sentiment of love, and by the cloistered or regular life.

1 In the *Yale Review*, xxii, no. 4, 1933. In the poem as printed in the *Yale Review* there are two defective readings, caused by failure correctly to decipher the dim and rubbed words of the original sheet—'inquiring' for 'misgiving' and 'securely' for 'serenely' (lines 19, 32, respectively).

The poem which we have entitled 'To Meta: the Cloister,' is the incomplete attempt of the poet to deal with the third of these themes.

The 'Stanzas from the Grande Chartreuse' probably represent the completed project, and therefore sustain an obvious relation to this early, rejected lyric. The success of the 'Stanzas' may explain Arnold's failure to complete and publish this shorter version of the theme.

It is noteworthy that the verses are in the form of 'The New Sirens'. 'Meta,' like 'Eugenia' (who is also mentioned in the list) cannot be confidently identified with any actual person; but it would seem reasonable to suppose that she stands for Arnold's sister Jane (afterwards Mrs. Forster), the 'Fausta' to whom 'Resignation' was addressed.

[*To Meta: The Cloister*]

Calm'd by bitter disabusings  
Of all thirst of earthly things,  
Ah! they walk in starry musings  
Like stone-sculptured, antique kings,  
Slowly, past the open spaces 5  
Of their cloister, see, they glide—  
Tears have washed their austere faces—  
Neither hate have they—nor fear—nor pride.

See, one figure quits the mazes  
Of that dusk slow-moving band, 10  
This way moves, and pauses, gazes  
On the sweet and moon-bathed land:  
Softly gleam the far blue mountains—  
Dark the valley sleeps in shade,  
Calm the murmur of the fountains 15  
Sinks and rises through this cool arcade.

Here, where life and all things living  
 Awe-struck fain would cease to be,  
 Meta, with a vague misgiving  
 Your sweet eyes are turned on me: 20  
 "Where," you whisper, "is assurance  
 Of a spirit softly clear  
 Of calm wishes, mild endurance—  
 All the heart enjoins, but only here?"

Spare me, Meta! Question rather 25  
 That long gazer leaning near—  
 Touch his robe and say—"My father,  
 Tell me, is it quiet here?  
 Say, my father, does the tired  
 Restless heart, in this retreat 30  
 Learn to know what it desired,  
 Knowing, clasp it, and serenely beat?"

At your voice he rises slowly  
 From the pillar where he leans—  
 In your gentle melancholy 35  
 All your spirit's history gleams:  
 Scans those parted lips, that purely  
 Pleading gaze—that forehead clear—  
 Signs the cross and answers, "Surely  
 You say true, my daughter, peace is here." 40

11 MS. gazing.

15 MS. Cool is written over calm as an alternative reading.

16 MS. charm'd is written over cool as an alternative reading.

### LUCRETIVS

On March 17, 1866 Arnold wrote to his mother: 'I am rather troubled to find that Tennyson is at work on a subject, the story of the Latin poet Lucretius, which I have been occupied with for some twenty years. I was going

to make a tragedy out of it, and the worst of it is that every one, except the few friends who have known that I had it in hand, will think I borrowed the subject from him. So far from this, I suspect the subject was put into his head by P[algrave], who knew I was busy with it. I shall probably go on, however, but it is annoying, the more so as I cannot possibly go on at present so as to be ready this year, but must wait till next.' <sup>1</sup>

'Lucretius' was, apparently, to have been Arnold's *chef d'œuvre* in poetry. During his lifetime he published occasional 'fragments' from the drama.<sup>2</sup> It is our privilege to print here <sup>3</sup> some additional and hitherto unpublished verses which appear in manuscript materials found in Arnold's writing-cabinet after his death. These last are the property of his grand-daughter, Mrs. Norman Thwaites. They consist of a large note-book lettered 'Mythologica' and some loose sheets. The greatest part of the notes upon various classical subjects are notes of reading for 'Lucretius'—in all some thirty pages. These show beyond all doubt that Arnold's plans for his poem and his labour upon it were, at several times in his career, fairly intensive. A rough sketch of this work can at least be traced.

Arnold's first contacts with Lucretius were obviously the result of his formal education and, one may assume, of his father's interest in Roman history. The first appearance of Lucretius on any reading list is in the note-book for 1845. This reading is continued in 1846. In the Yale MS., above a list of poems to compose in 1849 is the direction, 'Chew Lucretius.'

<sup>1</sup> *Letters* I.322. The name of Palgrave is supplied from the manuscript letter.

<sup>2</sup> See above, p.214.

<sup>3</sup> *Infra*, pp.345ff. The MS. is reproduced literally.



We have indicated elsewhere <sup>4</sup> the relation between Arnold's composition of 'Empedocles on Etna' and his meditation of Lucretius, a relation made clear in manuscript materials there cited. We have suggested that 'Empedocles,' which drew heavily upon *De Rerum Natura*, really expressed the thought of Lucretius and, however objective and wide the scope of the proposed Roman play, used up the essential substance of what Arnold had in mind.

He did, of course, renew his efforts. In 1855, 'Balder Dead' out of the way, he turned again to his work of getting up the Roman background for his play. Plutarch's *Lives*, Arnold's *Later Roman Commonwealth*, Niebuhr on Italian topography, and particularly Drumann's *Geschichte Roms in seinem Uebergange von der republikanischen zur monarchischen Verfassung* occupy much of his reading list, particularly for the last quarter of the year. In April, 'Lucretius' is listed, with Shakespeare's *Coriolanus* for accompaniment. The latter, perhaps not read in April, is set down again for November.

On December 29, 1855, Arnold wrote to his friend Wyndham Slade: 'I am full of a tragedy of the time of the end of the Roman Republic—one of the most colossal times of the world, I think. [You and Nina will both appear in it.] It won't see the light, however, before 1857.'<sup>5</sup>

In 1856 the reading for 'Lucretius' continued. *Coriolanus*

<sup>4</sup> See above, pp.292-6.

<sup>5</sup> *Letters* I 49. The part in brackets, which we are unable to elucidate, is inserted from the original manuscript of the letter which we have seen. Slade, when he sent his letters from Arnold to George Russell for the edition of 1895, furnished notes, the rough drafts for which we have also examined. 'The idea of writing a Poem of the Roman Republic period,' Slade says, 'was not carried out. I do not know that it was begun. He spoke to me about it.'

is again entered for January; *Julius Cæsar*, for March and June; *Antony and Cleopatra*, for September. Plutarch is listed for February, April, and September. Cicero is down for March and April, and 'Italian topography' for the same months, as well as for May and September. September notes 'Drumann's Sulla, Cælius &c.' For March there is the actual entry: 'at Lucretius.' Arnold's plans for November and December, however, show him 'at Merope,' the work which apparently broke off his renewed efforts at 'Lucretius' and occupied him through 1857.

In 1858, however, he returns to his old task. The reading of Cicero is resumed. In the back of his note-book, listed as specific reading 'For Lucretius' are these: *Götz von Berlichingen*, *Manon Lescaut*, *Lélia*, *Hamlet*, *Lear*, *Troilus & Cressida*, 'Ninon-Chamfort,' Rousseau's *Rêveries*, *Figaro*, *Faust*, *Casanova*.<sup>6</sup>

But 1859, an important year in Arnold's life, was chiefly occupied by his trip to the Continent and his study of foreign schools. The inspiration of his close contact with Sainte-Beuve and other French critics whom he met in Paris seems to have turned him more and more to prose. In 1859 he worked on his modern pamphlet, *England and the Italian Question* rather than on the ancient Italy of Lucretius. In 1860 came the lectures on Homer and then for several years the *Essays in Criticism*. The transition in Arnold's life was accomplished, and thereafter the likeli-

<sup>6</sup> Written in pencil in the back is also this entry:

Lucretius

Méditations d'un Solitaire

268, 276, 293, 298, 311

If a connexion is intended, the reference is, of course, to page numbers in Senancour's '*Méditations d'un solitaire inconnu*.'

hood of his ever completing his Roman play grew steadily less. The manuscript notes of materials for his poem are of uncertain date; but there is no evidence, in spite of the letter of 1866 quoted above, that work on the tragedy was ever resumed with any vigour. The reading of Sellar's *Roman Poets* in 1863, with its considerable treatment of Lucretius, must have stirred Arnold's memory. But his hands were then full of other things.

The hope, however, of finishing his play never quite left him. As the time of retirement from the Education Office drew near he planned a return upon poetry. On January 13, 1886 he wrote to Goldwin Smith:

I resign in May. . . . One or two things in verse which all my life I have wished to do I am now probably too old to do well; but on this point I hope the inward monitor will inform me rightly if I make the attempt to do them. One of them is a Roman play, with Clodius, Milo, Lucretius, Cicero, Cæsar in it; Arthur Stanley was always interested, dear soul, in this project. I can hear him now saying to some one, 'You hear he is going to bring in Cæsar and Cicero.'<sup>7</sup>

This last is an interesting indication of what the scope of the play really was, and is, indeed, supported by Arnold's manuscript notes towards the play. Just what turn the action was to take and where the emphasis was to lie it is impossible to say. The notes are simply collections of detail on the facts of Roman history, geography,<sup>8</sup> and genealogy—i.e., facts about Cæsar, Cicero, Sylla, Pompey,

<sup>7</sup> *A Selection from Goldwin Smith's Correspondence*, London, [1913], p.182

<sup>8</sup> Notes on a sheet from the Education Department, of printed date '185-' are headed 'Italy—vegetation' and give details of trees, vines, and gardens. The additional fact that many of these notes are from Drumann would indicate—though not conclusively—that they were taken in 1855-6.

Clodius, Milo, Scaurus, the Claudian family, 'events at the end of 53.' The fragmentary sketches show that one of the principal characters was to be Caius Memmius. But just what final design all this was to take we certainly do not know.

Arnold's fullest account of Lucretius is that given in his inaugural lecture as Professor of Poetry at Oxford.<sup>9</sup> He there attributes to Lucretius a 'modern *feeling* not less remarkable than the modern *thought* in Thucydides,' and he sets forth eloquently the weight of ennui and depression that turned Lucretius from the world and drove him 'to learn the nature of things.' Lucretius is a 'great philosopher,' but he is 'overstrained, gloom-weighted, morbid; and he who is morbid is no adequate interpreter of his age.' And this side of Lucretius Arnold had already given in his full-length portrait of Empedocles.

*Fragments of 'Lucretius'*

- (1)      Thou mirror that hast danc'd through such a world  
             So manifold so fresh so brave a world  
             That hast so much reflected,—but alas  
             Retain'd so little in thy careless depths.
  
- (2)      It is a sad sight when the world denies  
             A gifted man the power to shew his gift;  
             When he is tied and thwarted from his course;  
             When his fine genius foams itself away  
             Upon the reefs and sandbanks of the world,  
             And he dies fruitless, having found no field:  
             There is a sight more saddening yet, when all

<sup>9</sup> Published eleven years later as an article, 'On the Modern Element in Literature,' *Macmillan's Magazine*, VOL. XIX., February, 1869, pp. 304-14. The lecture was reprinted in *Essays in Criticism*, Third Series.

Has been perform'd which can be, when the man  
 Has reach'd the limit of his utmost growth  
 Unthwarted undiverted, when he stands,  
 Having been further'd to his very wish,  
 And stands—a failure: then, then happens, Oppius,  
 The true heart-breaking—baffled hope, and shame,  
 Sharp sense of deep self-ignorance, fear of looks  
 Of pitying friends, derisive enemies,  
 These, these are pangs which make the mind a hell,  
 And rend his heart who sees them.

- (3) To me it seems as vain, Lucretius,  
 For any man to fret against his weakness  
 Of mental nature as for him to fret  
 Against a sickness or deformity.  
 Neither his mind nor body did he make  
 Neither his mind nor body can he change.  
 Feeble he rests, if feeble he was born\*  
if he can never change  
 And wherefore then having no claim to more  
 Are we dissatisfied with what we are?‡  
 Our discontent itself is argument  
 That we were destin'd to a happier state—#

(4) It is a sad thing to see a man who has been frittered away piece-meal by petty distractions, and who has never done his best. But it is still sadder to see a man who has done his best, who has reached his utmost limits—and finds his work a failure, and himself far less than he had imagined himself.

- (5) Ours is the reflex image of the world  
His is  
 But His the prior pattern: he designed,

as

\* *Written over* Both he must keep, torment him how they may.

‡ *are over have cancelled.*

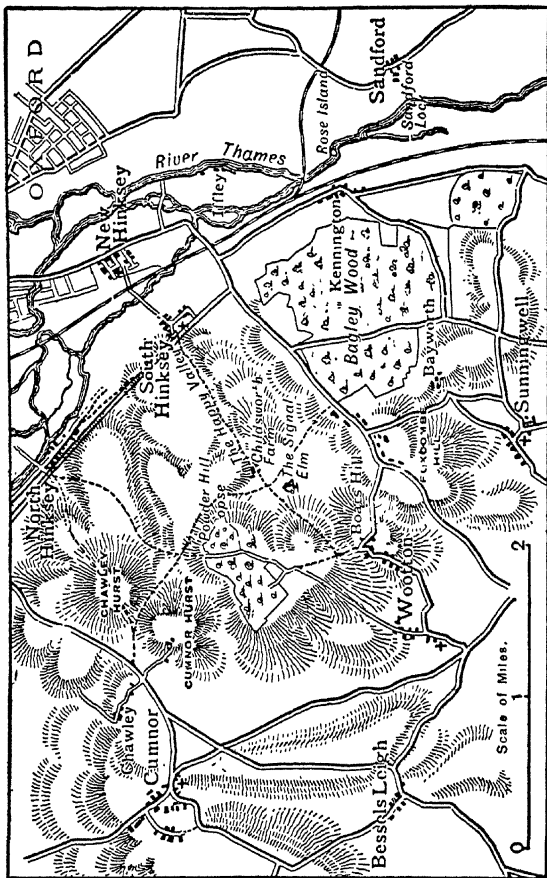
# *The last two lines are written at the side, and may not be part of the passage*  
*Beside the passage are the words, because we see others which is, one supposes,*  
*the poet's answer to what he has written.*





## APPENDIX





'THE SCHOLAR-GIPSY COUNTRY' from the *Little Guide to Berkshire*, Methuen & Co. Ltd.

## THE SCHOLAR-GIPSY COUNTRY

by

Sir Francis Wylie

'I KNOW these slopes: who knows them if not I?' Yes: Arnold certainly knew them, the 'warm green-muffled Cumner hills' that lie south-west of Oxford; gave them indeed the devotion of a lifetime. 'I am going,' he writes in 1854, 'with Walrond today to explore the Cumner country, and on Thursday I got up alone into one of the little coombs Papa was so fond of, and which I had in my mind in the Gipsy Scholar, and felt the peculiar sentiment of this country and neighbourhood as deeply as ever.' And a few years later, 'I am going to my old haunts among the Cumner hills, and shall come back with plenty of orchises and blue-bells.' 'My old Cumner country,' he calls it in 1870: and writes, as late as 1885, 'On Friday I got out to Hinksey and up the hill to within sight of the Cumner Firs. I cannot describe the effect this landscape always has upon me.'

If he has not 'described' it, at any rate 'Thyrsis' and 'The Scholar-Gipsy' make it plain enough. More than twenty years divide the poems, but in feeling for 'the Cumner ground, its fir-topped Hurst, its farms, its quiet fields' the later poem is as fresh and warm as the earlier. It is to this country that he goes for inspiration when, after Clough's death, he desires 'to think him over as I could wish.' The 'monody' in which he plans to commemorate his friend is to be 'a new poem about the Cumner hillside, and Clough in connection with it.' He admits later, when the poem was criticized as dealing only with one side of Clough, that there was much in Clough which could not be dealt with

in this indirect romantic way: 'Still Clough had his idyllic side too: to deal with this suited my desire to deal again with that Cumner Country.'

'The Cumner country,' that is what he always calls it, this whole district, across the Thames from Oxford, over which he had 'rambled' with Clough. And perhaps it is as good a name for it as he could have found. If you will look in any map at the County of Berkshire, you will see that it runs to a point in the north, where the Thames, which is the boundary between Oxfordshire and Berkshire, makes its giant sweep round the heights of Wytham and Boar's Hill. If you draw a line across-country from, say, New-bridge, on the Upper Thames, to Abingdon, on the Thames below Oxford, the corner of Berkshire which that line and the river will enclose is the bit of country which Arnold has made so romantically his own, and with which he has chosen to associate, in the one poem Glanvill's Gipsy Scholar, and in the other Clough. In the centre of that stretch of woodland, hill, and meadow lies Cumnor, a modest enough village, for all the fame that Scott and Arnold have done their best to bring to it. And near the village stands a fir-topped hill, Cumnor Hurst, from which you can see the spires of Oxford in the east, the Valley of the Upper Thames in the west, and, against the southern sky, the long line of the Downs. Arnold must often have stood on this hill, and on all sides of him will have stretched the country he loved. It was no bad name he chose for these Berkshire Uplands when he christened them 'the Cumner country.'

I stood not long since in a 'high field's dark corner' just above what Arnold calls 'Childsworth Farm'—Chilswell

is its proper name, ancient as well as modern, though Arnold had some authority for Childsworth<sup>1</sup>—almost, it might be, where Arnold himself lay, so many years ago, with Glanvill's book beside him: and my eye, as his, travelled down to Oxford's towers. And as I looked, over Oxford, to the hills beyond, where are Elsfield and Beckley, Studley and Brill, Stow-wood and Otmoor, I could not but wonder that Arnold's rambles, and likings, should have been, quite literally, so onesided; for there is great country on that eastern side of Oxford too. With this still in my mind, I came across an article written many years ago,<sup>2</sup> in which the writer tells us of walks, or rides, which he had taken round Oxford in the years between 1848 and 1852. 'It is,' he writes, 'with the other side of Oxford, the Eastern that I think Oxford men of my time were the least acquainted. . . . As a general rule I found all this region a closed book to my contemporaries.' Well, Arnold was almost a contemporary; and to him too this eastern side of Oxford was, seemingly, little known. Or did he perhaps know it, only it had not, for him, the 'peculiar sentiment' which he found among the Cumnor hills? Warde Fowler, that gentle Oxford scholar who loved birds and the countryside, writing thirty years ago, in the *Oxford Magazine*, about Boar's Hill (and Boar's Hill is the very heart of Arnold's Country) says 'At Beckley or Forest Hill' (these are on the eastern side) 'I am in the midlands; here I am in the sunny South.' It may be that Arnold also missed on the eastern side something warm and homely that he found in the country to the west. Be the reason what it may, the

<sup>1</sup> In the Ordnance Survey map of 1830.

<sup>2</sup> Reprinted in *The Oxford Country*, edited by R. T. Gunther.


Scholar-Gipsy country lies wholly to the west and south-west of Oxford, on the Berkshire, not the Oxfordshire, side of the Thames: and Boar's Hill is in the middle of it.

Boar's Hill is the modern name for the high ground that looks down on the two Hinkseys to the north-east, and on the villages of Wootton, Besselsleigh, and Appleton to the west, where the ground falls to the Thames by North-moor. It takes its name from a hamlet on its western slope, of which the eighteenth century antiquarian Hearne says 'Bosehill is a strange retired solitary place. It is the same as Boushill, or Oxhill, or rather Woodhill, though others say Boarshill.' This name, however, in any of its forms, seems to have been applied rather to the village than to the hill as a whole. For that, the general name in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries was Foxcomb (or Foxcombe) Hill, a name now used more particularly of the southern end of the Boar's Hill plateau. Oxford in early days, as Hearne comments, had woods on all sides of it; and Boar's Hill, or Foxcombe Hill, almost to the end of the last century was still a place of copse and heath—'a country of Scotch firs, bracken, and gorse,' Warde Fowler calls it—a secure escape for those who would be alone; full, we may be sure, in the Scholar-Gipsy's day, of the 'shy retreats' he loved. The wonder of its loneliness has passed. Indeed, parts of it are almost suburban. But parts only; there are still stretches of wood, still gorse and bracken and bluebells, still coombs and open fields, and views that make the heart stand still.


Now to one wishing to go to this hill from Oxford two ways are open—indeed three, only the third is less direct than the other two. Suppose we take the more southerly

route, cross the Thames by Folly Bridge, and follow what is now called Abingdon Road, but in the Scholar-Gipsy's time 'Henxey Steps.' Half a mile along that road we turn west, down Lake Street. See! on the ridge in the distance, against the sky, a single tree. We cross reservoir and railway by 'Jacob's Ladder,' and are at once upon

the causeway chill

Where through flooded fields foot-travellers go. 

And we pause presently on a wooden bridge, and remember that on this Arnold once, in fancy, met the Scholar-Gipsy

his face towards Hinksey and the wintry ridge. 

The causeway ends at the village of South Hinksey—one of the two Hinkseys in which

Nothing keeps the same;

The village street its haunted mansion lacks,

And from the sign is gone Sibylla's name,

And from the roofs the twisted chimney stacks.

Sibylla! Not just the name you would expect to find on a tavern sign-board. But Arnold was not inventing. The hostess of the Cross Keys in South Hinksey in Arnold's time was, in sober fact, one Sybella Curr. She died in 1860, as you can read on her tombstone in the churchyard, a few steps from the gate; and her name would have disappeared from the sign shortly before Arnold revisited this countryside, after Clough's death, 'accumulating stores'<sup>3</sup> for the new poem he had in mind. But you must not take the

<sup>3</sup> Letter to his mother, April 25, 1863.

present Cross Keys inn, with its imposing signboard, for Sybella's; that, it seems, was on the other side of the road.

If the twisted chimney stacks were also in this village, Arnold lamented their disappearance prematurely, for two of them were still there as late as 1904, as is noted by a writer in the *Oxford Magazine* of that date. But they may just as well have been in the sister Hinksey—North Hinksey; for in that village too Arnold must certainly have been when he came to wander about this country and revive old memories. The changes he notes so sadly are, after all, in 'the *two* Hinkseys'; and in fact the 'haunted mansion' was not in South Hinksey, but in North—and where it stood is known.

Beyond the village our path runs up the valley facing us—the 'happy valley,' to give it the name by which most Oxford walkers know it. We reach higher ground; and, see! once more, on the ridge, a mile away, a single tree against the sky.

The path drops to Chilswell Farm; and here, for a few hundred yards, the rising ground ahead of us hides the tree. We climb the slope, turning midway, in pious memory of the Gipsy-Scholar, to pick out Christ Church Hall from among the towers and spires and pinnacles of Oxford; and we rest at last under a hedge. Beyond the hedge, a few yards only, is the tree which, for so much of our way, has beckoned us from the ridge.

Surely this must be Arnold's Tree. Generations of Oxford men have so called it. It was known as such, according to the late Mr. Claridge Druce, as early as 1879, thirteen years after the publication of 'Thyrsis.' Its claim, however, has not gone unchallenged. And we need not resent that.

After all, Arnold does speak always of an *elm*, whereas this tree is, uncompromisingly, an oak. Also, Arnold's elm

looks on Ilsley Downs

The Vale, the three lone wears, the youthful Thames;

and our tree does nothing of the sort, for a further ridge—or extension of the same ridge, since the top of Boar's Hill is really a broad plateau—gets in the way. So it is not surprising that there have been those who have tried, not very successfully, to find some other tree which would fit better with what 'Thyrsis' tells us. Some would even cut the knot by maintaining that Arnold's tree, if it ever existed, does so no longer.

But that is to be too easily discouraged. After all, the Arnold who wrote 'Thyrsis' had been long a stranger to the hill ('too rare, too rare, my visits now; 'now seldom come I since I came with him'); almost loses his way; fails even, at first, to find his tree. By the time he discovers it, it is too late for him to reach the crest of the hill on which it stands. What, later, he would recall would be just a tree against the sky, crowning a ridge, somewhere beyond which, he knows, lies a valley through which the Thames winds, and across which the Downs show. He just forgot, when he came to write 'Thyrsis,' exactly how the land on the top of Boar's Hill lay. Is that too much to claim? Well, Thomas Hardy certainly forgot, when he made Jude look at Oxford from the Downs above Wantage, that Boar's Hill rose, impenetrable, between.

And what if the tree *is* an oak, not an elm? For Arnold, his tree was just a feature in the landscape, a landmark, a 'signal tree.' I question whether either he or Clough ever thought to ask what sort of tree it was. Twenty years later,



it was just a tree seen from far off; and who that knows the tree will be so bold as to say that, so seen, it proclaims itself—to the layman at any rate—an oak? Not, I think, many.<sup>4</sup>

And there is something more. Arnold himself is said, on good authority, to have told more than one friend that the traditional tree (and that is the tree above Chilswell Farm) was the tree he had had in mind when writing 'Thyrsis.'

*Quid plura?*

It is by this route, through South Hinksey, that most people think that Arnold, in 'Thyrsis,' pictured himself as approaching Boar's Hill. We need not, however, forget that there is another way to Boar's Hill with which Arnold will have been equally familiar, through North Hinksey—or Ferry Hinksey, as most of us have been accustomed to call it; but now the ferry is closed, and in time, no doubt, the name, its meaning gone, will die.

It is historic ground this little village, for it was by this way that in long-past days traffic from the west reached Oxeneford. 'It may be taken as certain,' says Dr. H.E. Salter in his recent Lectures on Medieval Oxford, 'that the ford from which Oxford took its name was at Hinksey Ferry. . . . In Saxon times the only serviceable way from Oxford to Berkshire was by Hinksey.'

Here also it was that Ruskin led out his little band of disciples, thinking to demonstrate the dignity of labour by making a good road where a bad one was, and brought them presently home again, having demonstrated chiefly,

<sup>4</sup> A forester friend tells me that the tree is dressed much as elms often are; and I find a similar statement in a small book on 'The Oxford Poems of Matthew Arnold' published by Alden and Co Oxford. See also letters by Professor Polard in *The Times Literary Supplement* of March 25 and April 15, 1939

so it was said, that more goes to the making of a road than goodwill. There is a story that the owner of the land subsequently sent a surveyor to report on the state of the road, whose report ran, 'The young men have done no mischief to speak of.' But that story, like others before and since, may well have come out of an Oxford Common-Room.

From Ferry Hinksey two paths start. The right-hand one leads, directly, not to Boar's Hill, but to Cumnor Hurst. At its start it goes up one of 'the little Coombs Papa was so fond of.' This Coomb has been saved from 'development' by Colonel Ffennell of Wytham, who has given it to the citizens of Oxford for a park. Its name, Raleigh Park, keeps alive in the village the name of Sir Walter Raleigh, late Professor of English Literature in Oxford, who had his home here. None will grudge Sir Walter Raleigh—so lovable, so witty, so delightfully unprofessional—this memorial. And yet—one is tempted to ask whether it is not Matt. Arnold's spirit rather than Walter Raleigh's that rests, and will always rest, upon this stretch of Cumnor slopes.

Raleigh Park ends in a mushroom growth of houses; but the path escapes, and comes out on the open hill, Chawley Hurst, where gorse blooms for so many months in the year, dropping afterwards to the foot of Cumnor Hurst, whose pines, sadly reduced in number, are no longer the proud landmark they were; indeed, when I was last there, they bore, as you might say, a shamefaced air, and shivered very forlornly in the wind. This path, from which there is one of the purest views of Oxford you can get from anywhere, Arnold must often have taken. I suspect he took it one Friday in October 1885, when he 'got out to Hinksey, and up the hill to within sight of the Cumner firs.' But when a

writer in the *Oxford Magazine* in April 1904 calls it, without so much as a 'by your leave,' 'Arnold's walk,' it is time to protest. If one talks of 'Arnold's walk,' one means, I take it, the walk in 'Thyrsis,' with the tree as its goal. Now, unless you subscribe to the heresy that Arnold's tree was the elm which did undoubtedly stand on Cumnor Hurst (you can see the uprooted stump there still), but which, so far from being 'bare on its lonely ridge,' stood in fact cheek by jowl with the clump of pines which dominated the hill and were its distinctive feature; unless, I say, you subscribe to this heresy—and there is no reason to think that the writer of the article did so—you have no right, or at least no reason, to start Arnold on his 'Thyrsis' walk up this path. If he had come this way at all, he would almost certainly have taken the path on the left. That leads, not to the Hurst, but to 'the high wood' and the Boar's Hill ridge-way. It is part of an old pack-horse track that brought travellers to Oxford from Besselsleigh and beyond; and down it many a man will have ridden as he came 'from hunting with the Berkshire hounds.' For some way it is to-day not the footpath Arnold knew, but a road, which threatens, but so far only threatens, the peace of this hill-side. Then the road gives out, and we are on turf. A little further and the path goes into a field, up which it runs, to be lost in Powderhill Copse, which is the easterly end of what I take Arnold to have meant by the 'high wood.' But we shall not follow the path there, for our attention is caught by something at our feet—a track that runs, athwart the path, from Chawley brickworks to Chilswell Farm, and the words of the poem come, unbidden, to the mind—

Runs it not here the track by Childsworth Farm?

Can it be that Arnold came, on the 'Thyrsis' walk, not from South Hinksey, but from North Hinksey, and paused at this point, a little bewildered, and, looking for his tree, failed—as here he only could—to find it? If so, then hereabouts also will it have been that the 'troop of Oxford hunters' broke upon him, and drove him towards Chilswell Farm. And, as he moved that way, a field or two further on, the Tree, hidden before by a bulging hillside, will have come suddenly into view, against the glow of a winter sunset. And then perhaps, comforted, he will have turned to make his way back to Oxford, in the failing light, by Chilswell and South Hinksey.

It is possible to read the poem so. Most Oxford men, however, as I have already said, picture Arnold as going through South Hinksey (Sibylla's Hinksey) and up the happy valley. I should be glad to feel sure they are right. And yet—surely it is strange that, if he had come that way from Oxford, with the tree in full view for so large a part of his walk, Arnold should then have been as bewildered as he represents himself as being when, in the dip by Chilswell Farm, the tree was, for a short while, hidden. On the North Hinksey route, on the other hand, there would have been no point from which he could see the tree until, flying from the horsemen, he reached a field a few hundred yards nearer Chilswell.

Well, we leave it at that. Others after us will no doubt in their turn try to reconstruct from the poem itself the walk which they fancy lies behind it. Those who know the Boar's Hill slopes as well as they know 'Thyrsis' will not find it easy to deny themselves this fond curiosity. And all the time perhaps the true answer is that 'Thyrsis' en-

shrines, not one experience, but many—the ascent of Boar's Hill on different walks by different paths, and the vision of the valley beyond from more points than one.

No doubt it would be to the Boar's Hill uplands that Arnold would go most easily and most often; to Powderhill Copse and Henwood, where the bluebells grow and, when these wither, the fern 'uncrumples'; or to the heaths on the ridgeway—there were no houses there then, or unfriendly walls, to deny him the view of the Vale—to Pickett's Heath and Tommy's Heath.

But he tracked his lost Scholar over a wider range than this; to 'lone alehouses in the Berkshire moors,' to the upper reaches of the Thames, to Fyfield and the hamlets of the Vale, to 'the forest ground called Thessaly.' So, thinking I would track him myself along these remoter ways, I set out one morning from Oxford, and, starting up the river, came to where a causeway leads across marshy ground to the hamlet of Binsey, half a mile beyond which, close beside the little church, is the well of St. Margaret—or, as it may just as well be called, of St. Frideswide, for it came, we are told, as an answer to her prayers. Near as this is to Oxford, nowhere could our Scholar-Gipsy better have found the 'retired ground' he loved. In the field by the church he could have lain, perhaps he did lie, the day long undisturbed, for the road comes to a stop here, and for hours on end no one comes. But I had no time for St. Margaret that day, and held my way up the towpath; and across the river the great meadow of the Freemen of Oxford lay in the sunshine, reaching to Wolvercote and Godstow.

A great place is Port Meadow for bird lovers. Plovers

wheel endlessly above you; a heron may be fishing in the shallows at its side; yellow wagtails in the spring dart this way and that; at times you may hear, before you are anywhere near him, the redshank's warning note. Any moment a kingfisher, or perhaps a sandpiper on migration, may startle and delight you. Rarer birds, too, on occasion. And it came into my mind that, keen as was his eye for flowers, Arnold took, it would seem, less note of birds, even if he did sing of Philomela. In 'The Scholar-Gipsy' and 'Thyrsis' he makes passing mention of swallows, rooks, nightingales, and blackbirds; and there is the famous image of the cuckoo in 'Thyrsis'—though one almost forgets the bird in the riot of flowers with which Arnold surrounds his departure and return. But this Cumnor country is as full of birds as of flowers—plovers, woodpeckers, doves, wood-pigeons, blue jays, and all the warbler tribe; and, down by the Thames, the water birds. And Arnold seems almost unaware. It is the flowers he remembers: the blue convolvulus, the scarlet poppies, the frail-leaf'd white anemone, the dark bluebells, the purple orchises with spotted leaves, the white flowering nettles, roses, chestnut flowers, lilies, blossoms of fallen may, the musk carnations, gold-dusted snapdragon, sweet-William with its homely cottage smell, stocks in fragrant bloom, the uncrumpling fern, the Cumnor cowslips, the white and purple fritillaries, the daffodil and the primrose, red loosestrife and blond meadowsweet—he notes all these, and tenderly you would almost say. They are part of what he finds so lovable in this countryside.

But this digression has brought me, on my walk, to Godstow, where there are still a few remains of the twelfth

century nunnery, in the church of which Fair Rosamond was buried. Arnold has no word for her or the nunnery, as he has none for St. Frideswide, or even for Amy Robsart of Cumnor. They would not, it seems, be proper to the pastoral setting within which he wishes to put the Scholar-Gipsy and Clough.

A hundred yards above Godstow Bridge is a small foot-bridge; and, as I stand on it, out from below me a kingfisher flashes, crosses the stream, and is lost among the bushes. Just the gleam of a moment; but the day is not the same after it as before.

As I turn away, I see, a mile to the left, the roofs of the cottages in Wytham, smoke curling idly from their chimneys, and behind them the green of the Park. Have you not been to Wytham? Why, it ranks with Ewelme, Great Tew, Bibury—famous villages all of them. It is an unspoilt Berkshire village, nestling in such peace you wonder could anything ruffle it; and a neglected arm of the Thames drifts lazily by. I have sometimes wondered whether perhaps it was here the boatman lived from whom Arnold hired the skiff in which ‘among the Wytham flats’ he ‘tracked the shy Thames shore’—and remembered, years after, the girl even who unmoored his boat; and had, by reason of this old association, as he writes to his mother, a special fondness for the stanza beginning ‘Where is the girl who by the boatman’s door?’

From Godstow, through ‘the wide fields of breezy grass’ in which, one remembers, the Scholar-Gipsy could sometimes be surprised, ‘sitting upon the river bank o’er-grown,’ it is no great way to the ‘abandoned lasher,’ where men came to bathe in Arnold’s day, but rarely now, as the

lock-keeper tells me. It was near here that Charles the First crossed the Thames on his famous night march of June the 3rd, 1644. And that perhaps may be why the lasher—no longer ‘abandoned’—has the royal name of King’s Weir.<sup>5</sup> From here I follow the river, still on the Berkshire side, to Eynsham Bridge, a matter of some three miles, with the Wytham woods, where the heronry is, rising on my left; but no heron shows there today. Nor are there any of Arnold’s fritillaries; for it is August, and they are over before the summer heat begins—and, indeed, I fancy they favour the Oxfordshire more than the Berkshire bank. His loosestrife and meadowsweet can be seen here and there; but it is willow-herb that chiefly catches the eye along the riverside.

A mile short of Eynsham Bridge—or Swinford Bridge, to give it its proper title—the Evenlode empties itself into the Thames. It has come from the Cotswolds, but it belongs, we may claim, to the country of Arnold and the Scholar-Gipsy, for, some few miles back, it has swept round the high ground on which as much as is left of Wychwood Forest stands; and there, of course, the Scholar-Gipsy must have been, or how could he have plucked flowers in ‘distant Wychwood bowers’? And Arnold too can have been no stranger in these waters: for did he not pick fritillaries in ‘the river-fields above by Eynsham,’ and claim to know ‘what sedged brooks are Thames’s tributaries’?

At Swinford Bridge there is a choice of ways. You can keep to the river, or, crossing to Eynsham, follow from

<sup>5</sup> Since writing the above I have learnt, through the Thames Conservancy, that the ‘King’s Weir’ is mentioned in a grant of the Manor of Wolvercote in 1541.



there a bridle-path that will bring you to Bablock-Hythe through three miles of meadow—just such a gentle way as our Gipsy-Scholar would be found along. I rode there once with one now dead; but he was my guide, and I did not particularly note how we went. The towpath is safer. And, in the long stretch from there to Bablock-Hythe, I meet only a party of small boys, going to fish. Of one of whom I ask what they are proposing to catch; and he, discovering something in my manner not altogether to his liking, makes the very proper reply, his eye twinkling quizzically, ‘A whale.’

I halt at Skinner’s Bridge; for it has Arnold associations. In his day it was no bridge, but a wear (it is so shown, and so spelt, in the Ordnance Survey Map of 1830)—Skinner’s wear by name: and will have been one of the ‘three lone weirs’ on which Arnold tried to make his Tree look. On my left is a broad valley, the heights of Wytham on one side of it, and on the other Cumnor Hurst and Boar’s Hill; and some think that it was down this valley that, in a far past, the Thames flowed to Oxford. Along this valley, in the fields under Wytham or Cumnor, cowslips, the ‘Cumnor cowslips’ of Arnold, may still be found—or could be when last I looked for them. I think they are not common anywhere else in this bit of country.

Nearing Bablock-Hythe, I see the slow beat of a heron’s wings as he flops out of sight; and, beyond, the ferry punt crossing the river; and I try to persuade myself that I see the Scholar-Gipsy in it, as Arnold’s fancy saw him, pensively trailing his fingers in the stream. But on a nearer approach I find the punt’s passenger to be an ice-cream vendor.

Arnold calls the river at Bablock-Hythe ‘the stripling

Thames'; but, as I cross in the punt, I find myself protesting that it is already here a quite respectable stream, as English streams go. It may well be that ninety years ago, in summer at any rate, the body of water in the river was smaller. A writer in 1850 <sup>6</sup> complains that 'the erection of the Pound lock at Godstow and the Water pen at Kingsweir' by raising the level of the river 'has changed some of the sweetest and finest herbage of Yarnton meads into a coarse, sedgy, and worthless grass.' He may be wrong in blaming Godstow lock; but what he tells us is suggestive. And certainly the substitution of efficient weirs for dilapidated and 'abandoned' ones would stop leakage, and tend to keep the water at a higher level. So it is not unlikely that the river hereabouts is really a more considerable stream than it was when Arnold knew it on summer walks in the 'forties of last century. And I like to play with the fancy that perhaps that is why old Father Thames goes so placidly by Bablock-Hythe today, unruffled by anything Arnold may have said of him when he was younger.

Gone is the old inn, on a bench outside which many an Oxford man, walking of a Sunday, has enjoyed his bread and cheese and beer—honest draught, you may be sure, no bottled stuff. Shabby as it was, the old 'pub' was perhaps in better keeping with its surroundings than the more pretentious 'Inn' that has taken its place. Scorning more distinguished quarters, I find a corner in the taproom, beside a real old Berkshire 'boor'—smockfrocked, alas, no longer—whom I may almost call an old friend too, for I have met him there, at his midday tankard, several times before. I cannot much understand his speech, but what matter; he

6 Quoted in *The Oxford Country*, edited by R. T. Gunther.

is of the soil, and almost of the past, and the place seems more homely because of him.

Two miles back from the river at Bablock-Hythe is Stanton-Harcourt, where you can see a room in which Pope worked at his translation of the *Iliad*; a famous kitchen; and some village stocks too, with which, we may suspect, some of the Scholar-Gipsy's friends will have been uncomfortably familiar. But although it is likely enough that our wandering Scholar passed that way, and to the river Windrush beyond—of which the name is not more beautiful than itself—that is beyond my beat today.

Should you wish to get back from Bablock-Hythe to Oxford by the shortest route, you must go up the Long Leys, a broad grass way, where in summer the dog-roses bloom—but you will need stout boots if it be winter when you go—to Cumnor village, and thence by a footpath across fields to Boar's Hill, and so to one or other of the two Hinkseys; and there is no more delightful walk. Half way up the Leys you will come upon a small and not too savoury-looking pool, just about where on your map you may see 'Physic Well' marked. And in Anthony Wood, the seventeenth century antiquarian, I find the following entry: 'This month' (June 1667) 'the well at Comnore in the highway going down to Bablack Hithe was discovered and frequented—and much resorted to by Scholars:' and a week or two later 'At Cumnor well to the woman 3d.' He seems to have tried the waters. He prophesies that they will not become famous 'because there is not water to supply a multitude.' Whatever the reason, he was a sound prophet. Few now know even what the entry on the map means. But in one of his wanderings the Gipsy-Scholar

too, coming from the Ferry at Bablock-Hythe to Cumnor village, may have tried the waters. And let us hope 'the woman' gave it to him free.

Cumnor itself is worth a visit as you pass. You must not expect to see the house in which Amy Robsart met her end; of that nothing remains. But in the church is a statue of Elizabeth, which Dudley no doubt set up in her honour somewhere in his grounds, and which, after strange wanderings, has returned to its proper home.

But that is not my way today, and I keep on up the river. And presently I rest in a field, and with me are only cattle and, feeding on the bank of the river, a family of moorhens. Not the Scholar-Gipsy himself could have felt more supremely alone. And I am filled with the pure Englishness of this Upper Thames country with its wide lush meadows among which the river noiselessly meanders. There is finer scenery in England, but none that is more unobtrusively distinctive.

I pass what seem to be the last traces of another weir, Ark Weir: and then, after more silent river meadows, find myself at still another 'Weir'—only, like Skinner's Weir, it is a weir no longer, but a footbridge over the river—a mile short of Newbridge; and you need not take that name too seriously, for the bridge is seven hundred years old. The three 'weirs,' so-called, by which I have come are, I surmise, the three 'lone wears' of 'Thyrsis'; and the epithet still fits them well. At the last of them I leave the river, and come, by beanfield and sheep-pen, to the village of Fyfield, just beyond which, where the road forks, stands what was plainly in its day a very stately elm. Tradition has it that this is the elm round which Arnold tells us maidens from

distant hamlets came to dance in May.<sup>7</sup> No one would think of dancing round it today. There would even, one feels, be something improper in making it the centre of so light-hearted an occasion. For indeed it is distressingly old; and although from the bark, which is all that is left of the trunk—and a bare half only of that—stout branches have sprung, the end cannot be far off. And, when the tired bark gives way, one more link with Arnold will have snapped.

Near this elm are the Tubney woods, to which children, and their elders too, go in spring for primroses and daffodils. It may well have been of this wood that Arnold was thinking when he wrote 'I know the wood that hides the daffodil.' And, it is worth noting, he passes immediately from this line to 'I know the Fyfield elm.'

A mile more of road, and here is Frilford heath, surely one of the 'Berkshire Moors' over which the Scholar-Gipsy wandered, among the gorse and heather. I cross, as he would have done, a corner of the golf links that now—ought we to say?—desecrate the heath, and seek a shady path I know of, and come so, past Cothill (there was a 'Cothill moor' there a hundred years ago) and Dry Sandford, to the foot of Boar's Hill. Here a field-path, newly benoticed as 'footpath to Sunningwell' goes off to the left; and that I take, but have trouble to come to Sunningwell by, for it has been long out of use. It is an old right of way, however, and I daresay Arnold will have been along it, and gone, as I go today, through the village of Sunningwell, ly-

<sup>7</sup> The correctness of this tradition may be open to question; but the tree was shown to me some forty years ago as Arnold's Fyfield Elm; and in a recent letter to *The Times Literary Supplement* (April 8, 1939) the writer says that the old inhabitants still point to this 'pathetic remnant' as Arnold's Elm.

ing at the foot of Foxcombe Hill, to Bayworth, and so, across fields, to the southern end of Bagley Wood. Bagley, you will remember, was one of the haunts of our Scholar and of the Gipsies with whom he travelled. But where the 'turf-edged way' may have been by which the gipsies are said to have pitched their smoked tents I am not so bold as to suggest—nor 'the forest ground called Thessaly' either. I fancy no one now knows, though others besides myself may think they do. You could get into Bagley Wood more easily then than you can today, and we may feel sure that the Scholar-Gipsy, and Arnold after him, often found their way there in spring, searching for the 'bluebells trembling by the forest ways,' or to

listen with enchanted ears,  
From the dark dingles, to the nightingales.

You may still hear nightingales in Bagley most moonlight nights in May—and if they sing there today, when there are houses dotted about, and motors passing and repassing, by night hardly less than by day, we may be sure they sang, if not more sweetly, certainly in greater numbers, in the quiet days that are gone.

From Bagley I drop down to Sandford—Sandford-on-Thames. No one who has known Oxford and its river but must have summer memories of Sandford that make the name pleasant in his ears—of the lasher, in the pool below which he bathed; of tea at the inn, to the sound of the water going over the mill-wheel; and of the quiet row home in the evening. Whether the Scholar-Gipsy came here or not, Arnold certainly did; he remembers the fritillaries growing, so he says, in the fields 'down by Sandford.'

Resting there today, I have the place very much to myself—strangely, for it is a Saturday afternoon; and I wish that I could sit a long while by the water, watching the swallows as they skim the river, dipping now and again for a tiny drink, or perhaps to pick a beetle from the water, but never pausing; or a boat, it might be, going through the lock, on its way to Abingdon or Newnham. But there are three miles still to go. As I leave, there are boys bathing by a little bridge; among the thistles that edge the path there are goldfinches playing; and, farther on, the eternal fisherman. And soon I am by Iffley, alongside the water-meadow in which especially one looks, in April, for the snakeshead flower, the fritillary. The old mill, which the poplars guarded, has gone; and the new lock is too splendid to be romantic. But the water still foams under the lasher, and across the river the Norman church still stands, as it has for close on eight hundred years, famous out of all proportion to its size. And you need not debate too nicely whether or no the Gipsy-Scholar found his way here. He may have, while still a lad at Oxford, before poverty drove him to join the 'extravagant people.' Be that as it may, all this Thames-side is, indisputably, Arnold country; and Iffley church is one of its chief glories. So you will do well to cross the river, and go up the short rise. You can rest afterwards by the yew in the churchyard, and feel, as assuredly you will, that nowhere could a man make a better end of journeying.

A little beyond Iffley I strike across the fields, and over one of the many unsuspected arms of the river, and am again in Oxford, having, as one might say, 'beaten the bounds' of the Scholar-Gipsy's country.

Across the centre of that country there are other walks

we could take, following still in his footsteps: through Wytham woods to Eynsham weir; from Cumnor to the upper river by Skinner's bridge, through fields where snipe and redshank resent your approach, and past the abandoned quarry which has become a pool, on which a pair of greater crested grebe nested this year; or from Boar's Hill to Northmoor lock, which is above Bablock-Hythe, through the villages of Wootton, Besselsleigh, and Appleton—and it will be fields, or common, nearly all the way.

But 'Eve lets down her veil.' And, as I stand at the end of Lake Street, waiting for the bus which is to climb the hill for me, the last thing that I see, high up in the distance, a little faint against a watery sky, is the Tree.

What fitter ending to a long day alone with the Scholar-Gipsy?





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